

Assessment of Local Governance under the Policy of Administrative Decentralization: The Case of Horro District, Or Omiya Regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study presents the assessment of local governance under the overriding policy of decentralization in Ethiopia taking the case study of Horro district. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in the study. In so doing, both primary and secondary data were collected during the study. Primary data was collected from the target population by using questionnaire, semi-structured interview and non-participant observation. Secondary data was gathered from literatures. The study used two sampling techniques: purposive and systematic. Purposive sampling method was used to identify sample kebeles (the lower unit of local government structure below district in Ethiopia) based on the availability of facilities and access to transportation, and to pick up the key informants for interview. In addition, systematic sampling was applied to select sample individual respondents from sample kebeles for the purpose of administering questionnaire. The total sample size of this study was 141, among which questionnaires were distributed to the sample population of 131 and the rest 10 people were interviewed. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 16.0 computer software, and the qualitative parts were done by narration. Stakeholders' participation, local good governance, service delivery and autonomy of the district were

discussed to assess administrative decentralization-local governance synergy. The result of the study reveals that there are moderate public participation in politics, and limited participation of CSO and private sector in development activities and administration. In addition, the findings demonstrate that there exists weak accountability, responsiveness and transparency. These happen due to more emphasis given to upward accountability, top-down nomination, and absence of Medias that helps to disseminate accurate information. There are also poor public service deliveries of potable water, electricity, health, road and agricultural extension, but good achievements have been observed in education and saving and credit services. The autonomy of the district is challenged due intervention from higher level government, particularly zone. Strengthening the process of decentralization at local government and encouraging stakeholders' participation to formulate and execute collective action can promote local governance in the study area.

Key Terms: Administrative decentralization, local governance, public service delivery, Horro district, stakeholders' participation, good local governance.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Over the last quarter century, decentralization reforms have swept across many countries of the world by transferring power and responsibilities of the state to lower tiers of government, changing decades of centralized political and economic practices as well as the way in which we study politics (Falleti, 2005). As Taye and Tegegne (2007) writes, “The underlying principle for decentralization is that the local government, being closer to their constituencies, will make quick responses to the local needs and thus would able to efficiently match the public services with the local preferences”. Due to multidimensional nature of the issue, there are many arguments for and against decentralization.

Political scientists who draw from the liberal tradition argue that decentralization helps to deepen and consolidate democracy by devolving power to local governments (Diamond and Tsaliq, 1999). Economists who draw from a market theory of local expenditures argue that decentralization helps to improve resource allocation through better knowledge of local preferences and competition among localities (Oates, 1972). Other scholars, meanwhile, warn against the devolution of

power to sub national officials and show that it can augment distributional conflicts (Treisman, 1999), foster sub national authoritarianism (Cornelius, Eisenstadt and Hindley, 1999), and exacerbate patronage (Samuels, 2003). Interestingly, despite their disagreements on the effects of decentralization for local governance and economic reform, all of the aforementioned studies share an assumption that decentralization increases the power of sub national officials.

There are different dimensions of decentralization that includes political (which focus on pluralistic politics and representative government with the aim to give citizens or their elected representatives more power in public decision making); administrative (which seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government); fiscal (which its central theme is to decentralize financial power and responsibility); and market (which focus on privatization and deregulation to shift functional responsibility from the public to the private sector) decentralization (WB, 2007).

As far as local governance is concerned, administrative decentralization is the most

practiced and accepted form of decentralization (Cohen and Peterson, 2005). It is the process of transfer of planning, financing and management responsibilities and functions from the central government, regional governments and its agencies to local governments, semi-autonomous public authorities and regional or functional authorities (UNDP, 2004).

More importantly, administrative decentralization is very closely interrelated with local governance. Local governance is a system through which citizens and their groups can articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences, and exercise their rights and obligations at local level (UNDP, 2004). Indeed, decentralization reinforces and legitimizes local governance

processes when correctly done.

Ethiopia has come to adopt decentralization policy since 1991 which transfers powers, resources, functions and responsibilities from the center to the regional and local governments (Taye and Tegegne, 2007). Consequently, nine regional states and two city administrations named Addis Abeba and Dire Dhawa were created. The process of decentralization in Ethiopia took two phases; the first phase was started in 1992

and ended in 2001 which transferred powers, functions and resources from the center to the regional government. This process deserves a landmark spot in the political development of Ethiopia. The second phase of decentralization began in 2001/2002 which whispered to further deepen the process of decentralization as it was aimed at further pushing powers, resources and functions to the local level governments (Meheret, 2002). This process is accompanied by a program called District Level Decentralization Program (DLDP).

DLDP is a sub-program of Ethiopia's capacity-building strategy. Its aim is to deepen the process of decentralization by empowering the lower tiers of the regional governments, the district administrative units, which is considered as the key level of local government. The first phase of the implementation of the program was limited to four regional states: Amhara state, Oromiya state, Southern Nations/ Nationalities and Peoples' state (SNNPs), and Tigray state (Meskerem, 2007). This program, as stated in its objective, is hoped to enhance the quality of local governance since it enables the government to be closer to the people and makes the local government more accountable, transparent and responsive to the local people.

Hence, this study attempts to assess how far local governance is promoted and improved by the process of administrative decentralization, particularly by DLDP, in Horro district. Located in the northeast central part of Horro Guduru Wollega zone of Oromiya regional state, Horro district constitutes twenty two rural *Kebeles* and one urban *Kebele*.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With 1991 government change, Ethiopia adopted a decentralized system of governance which was resulted in the establishments of nine regional states and two city administrations. After decade of practicing regional decentralization based on ethnic federalism, the country has again committed to decentralize power and function, and resources further down to the district level in 2001, i.e. DLDP. The objective of DLDP as explained in the program is “to provide the responsiveness and efficiency of public service delivery at the local level; to empower citizens to participate more effectively in shaping their own development; and to promote good governance” (MCB, 2004b).

However, despite the actual and planned moves for decentralizing power and resources to districts; evaluation reports (such as report by UN and MCB Joint

Programme Framework Document (2011); and MoFED (2010) on Country Report on Implementation of DLDP), researches and the results on the ground hardly justify the successes of this program particularly in improving local governance. District governments are not well functioning and does not exercise self-rule to act as an autonomous local government entities in line with country’s objective stated in DLDP. In this regard, Tegegne (2007) investigates that “though zonal administrations have under gone a process of scaling down and more powers were accorded to districts by DLDP and regional constitution, still in effect districts have not effective control of their own affairs”. Thus, Ethiopia’s decentralization process has not brought about adequate devolution of decision making power and responsibility to the district and *Kebele* tier of government.

Since administrative decentralization is directly or indirectly related with many aspects of local governance (like decision making, service delivery, transparency, accountability and responsiveness of public institution to community concern), the problem in decentralizing powers, functions and resources to lower tier have a direct effect in the exercises of local governance.

In Horro district, some studies like BoFED (Bureau of Finance and Economic Development) - Oromiya National Regional State (2008) reveals that, there are many problems with regard to local governance like lack of vibrant participation, weak accountability and transparency to the local community, and inability to respond peoples demands. As such the formulation and execution of collective action at local level, which is mandatory for the exercise of local governance, in the district remained to be poor. Moreover, in the district, there is weak delivery of vital public services to the local people. Especially in rural areas, some of the most elementary public goods such as open-access education, preventive and curative health measures, and well regulated communications infrastructure among others, continue to be provided badly. It is widely accepted that this is largely a governance problem.

Regarding the research and development in the arena of administrative decentralization, especially in relation with local governance, no studies have been conducted in the study area and there is a gap that needs to be assessed comprehensively. As a result, this study attempted to assess the issues of local governance at district and *Kebele* levels,

and below that up to households, to reveal the reality on the ground.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess local governance practices with special reference to administrative decentralization in Horro district, Ethiopia.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

- ◆ To examine up to what extent administrative decentralization, particularly DLDP, enable active participation of stakeholders' in local governance in the study area.
- ◆ To assess the exercise of good local governance in Horro district.
- ◆ To analyze the status of public service deliveries in the district.
- ◆ To identify the major challenges that Horro district and its *Kebeles* face while exercising local governance.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives of the study, the following research questions are developed:

1. To what extent administrative decentralization, particularly DLDP, enable active participation of stakeholders' in local governance at Horro district?

2. Does the district practicing good local governance?
3. Do public services are delivered effectively and efficiently in Horro district?
4. What are the major challenges faced in exercising local governance in the district?

1.5 Significance of the Study

In a country like Ethiopia where low quality of local governance performance is prevalent, the present study is believed to have a great importance in providing some insights in the country's progress towards decentralized local governance. It can reveal the effect of administrative decentralization on local people and how much stake holder's participation such as CSO, private sector and community at large was increased. Local governance has an imperative implication both in improving the quality of life of the local people in particular, and the country's socio- economic and political development in general. Hence, this study has significance in revealing directions for assuring the quality of local governance and solving challenges of local good governance.

Furthermore, the findings of the study may assist the federal, regional and local

officials, experts and policy makers to make policies, decisions and directions that are more responsive to the needs of the local people by assessing the practices of local governance and suggesting directions in promoting local good governance and improving service delivery to grass root peoples thereof.

Finally, the study can provide valuable information to those who are devoted to conduct further investigations with respect to local governance, and it will serve as spring source for those who want to study the quality of local governance under the umbrella of administrative decentralization in the district.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study was conducted starting from September 2013 to June 2014. It was delimited to assessing the exercise of local governance as far as administrative decentralization is concerned. The study explored issues that are related with local governance and administrative decentralization by particularly focusing on prevalent conditions in Horro district of Horro Guduru Wollega Zone, Oromiya Regional State of Ethiopia. The case study was based on the assumption that the experience from single district could reflect the exercise of local governance in all other districts of the country.

2. An Overview of Decentralization and Local Governance Practices in Ethiopia

This part includes four sections and each section highlights the local governance and decentralization efforts of Ethiopia starting from the period of Hailesillassie regime to the current regime of EPRDF. The first section gives insight about the issues of local governance and decentralization practices during the period of emperor Hailesillassie I. The second section synchronizes local governance efforts made by the Derg regime. The third section is devoted to discuss the process and efforts of EPRDF to necessitate decentralization and local governance in the political system of the nation under a paradigm shift. The final section provides an over view of current decentralization processes and practices in Oromiya regional state, particularly focusing on DLDP.

This study starts a thorough review of administrative decentralization and local governance of Ethiopia from the era of Hailesillassie, because prior to Hailesillassie's regime, the effort of decentralization was not institutionalized. In Ethiopia's history, the *zemene mesafint* (era of princes) which began in the second half of the 18th century and continued

until 1855 was characterized by the era of power fragmentations (Bahru, 2002). In 1855 Emperor Tewodros II (1855-1868) began a process of centralization and territorial expansion with the declared goal of establishing a unified Ethiopia. Also Emperor Yohannes IV (1872-1889), who became an important political figure after Tewodros, carried on with the weak centralization process. These two emperors, however, were unable to establish a neither strong centralized nor weak centralized (decentralized) monarchical rule despite their desire to do so. Technological and economic factors, the impenetrability of the terrain and an entrenched culture of regional and local consciousness would not allow that (Ibid). The process of territorial expansion and using local authorities for the purpose of control reached its apex under Menilik II (1889-1913) who ascended to power after the death of Emperor Yohannes IV (Zemelak, 2011). Menilik used both diplomatic persuasion and military coercion to expand his empire southward, and built a unified Ethiopia in 1900.

2.1. Decentralization During the Hailesillassie I Regime

Even though the introduction of local governments is traced back to Emperor Menilek II when he had completed the

state formation of Ethiopia, the first move toward the institutionalization of decentralization was made by Emperor Haileselassie I when the emperor submitted the *Awraja* Local Self-Administration Order No. 43 of 1966 to the then parliament (Kassahun, 2007). Emperor Haile Selassie I, who reigned for over half a century, is best known for his use of formal constitutional and legal means, such as 1931 first written constitution and other decrees, to centralize power.

Before revising the 1931 constitution in 1955, a number of decrees on the issues pertaining to provincial and local administrative reform such as decree No1/1942 and decree No 6/1946 was launched by Hailesillassie as a meant to modernize and standardize local administrations. These seem one foot step towards decentralization, yet according to Zemelak (2011), the ulterior motive of these reforms was to centralize powers.

In 1952, another development in the political arena of the country was introduced with the federation of Eritrea to Ethiopia as United Nations endorsed the federation of these two countries. As a result of this, and other external factors, the revised constitution of the 1955 was introduced in order to cope up with the

political development of Eritrea brought by the colonizer Italy (Daniel, 1994). This forced the emperor to decentralize some powers to the newly incorporated region, Eritrea, to exercise some autonomous powers and authorities.

Furthermore, the 1955 revised constitution endorsed some rights like freedom of speech, press, association, assembly, and give regards for the eligible electorate to elect the member of the lower chamber of deputies, and etc. However, like its precedents, the 1955 revised constitution did not attempt to encroach upon the uncontested authority and prerogatives of the emperor rather further ensuring the divinity and incontestability of the emperor's power (Kasahun, 2007).

The other major attempt made during 1960s was the idea to setup local self administration at the level of some selected *Awrajas* (provinces). In 1966 the new *Awraja* Local Self-Administration Order No. 43 of 1966 was introduced and submitted to the then parliament by the imperial regime. The order was signaling the first drives of institutional decentralization in the history of Ethiopia. The move was aimed at granting administrative autonomous for the selected administrative units (*Awrajas*) that were drawn from fourteen Governorate General

(Meheret, 2002). Indeed, local self administration would be given to the provinces/*Awrajas* if the provinces/*Awrajas* were able to fulfill the already prescribed criteria like, resource base, population and land size, sectorial potentials in economic terms, and proximity to one of the neighboring countries (Kassahun, 2007). Accordingly, 17 provinces/*Awrajas* that met the criteria were identified but the parliament were reluctant to endorse the proposal due to the skepticism of many deputies regarding the possibility of generating adequate revenue and due to the fear that it could undermine the authority of the central government and at the end would ship the country into disunity. Therefore, the initiative was remained simply in attempt without having operational significance on the situation of local government (Cohen and Koehn, 1980).

Generally speaking, no representative institutions existed at local level during the imperial regime. In some of the cities and towns, elected municipal councils were established. Yet, one had to own immovable property in order to vote or qualify to be elected to these councils. Moreover, a local official was not expected to engage in developmental

activities unless he was self-motivated (Zemelak, 2011).

Hence, prior to the 1974 Revolution the great majority of Ethiopia's rural population did not receive any services either from the local administrative units or the various ministries of the central government (Daniel, 1994). Hence, the exercise of local governance for the best preferences of local development is almost nonexistent, rather local governments are created and used as an instrument of control by the central government.

2.2. Decentralization During the Derg Regime

After the overthrow of the imperial regime in 1974, the Derg or PMAC (Provisional Military Administrative Council) came to power (Paulos, 2011). Following its coming into the scene of political power several magnificent measures were taken by the regime in relation to local government. Among which the most relevant one that the Derg had took to mobilize and galvanize the masses and at the same time used to reform the local government was the 1974 Land Reform Proclamation. The proclamation made all tenants, who were dispossessed land by the imperial regime, landholder and parallel to this, for the proper implementation of the

proclamation, several local institutions were constituted; among which Peasant associations (PA), and Urban Dwellers' Associations (UDA) were the major ones in rural and urban areas respectively (Kassahun, 2007).

These associations were established at *kebele* (sub-district), *woreda* (rural district) or *kefitegna* (urban district) and city or regional levels, the declared purpose for their establishment being to organize urban dwellers and peasants so that they could run their own affairs, solve their own problems and directly participate in political, economic and social activities (Tegegne, 1998).

The Derg had constituted the local units based on peasant association, the associations made from the lower units (*Kebele* Peasant Association, constituted peasants, tenants, landless laborers, and landowners holding fewer than ten hectares within 800 hectares) to the higher National Peasant Association (Ethiopia Peasant Association). All peasants who are practicing farming confined in a certain area were eligible to be a member of peasant association and the PAs were also given the responsibility for implementing the land reform, adjudicating on legislations, undertaking developmental activities like constructing

and renovating physical and social infrastructures in their respective localities (Markakis, 2007).

Proclamation No. 31/1975 give the legal bases for the establishment of district and *Awraja* level peasant association, whereas the creation of PAs at regional level came to effect later with another proclamation in the year 1977. However, the PAs from the district to the regional level, even though constituted based on election, were not acting as local units of administration rather they were responsible to cooperate with appointed district, *Awraja*, and regional administrations on the one hand and coordinate and supervise the grassroots or village PAs on the other hand. Hence, this indicates the existence of upward and downward accountability since the grassroots PAs on the one side became responsible to the higher PAs and in turn they were also accountable to the peasants who constituted it (Markakis, 1981). However practically, only upward accountability is in effect.

The Derg government issued the proclamation No.77/1975 in order for the Peasant Associations to participate in the revolutionary administrative and development committee. This move was held in the regime for the sake of ensuring mass mobilization and participation

especially in the policy implementation process (Zemelak, 2011). Indeed, the participation or the mobilization was not attributed to the so called higher level participation as the Derg has made the people only to participate in case of policy implementation instead of participating them in every phases of policy making starting from the policy formulation to the implementation level, and this way of participation created a clearly demarcated gap between the formulation and implementation of policy.

The second important local administrative unit was UDA (Urban Dweller's Associations). These associations were tempted with the issuance of the proclamation of Government Ownership of Urban Land and Extra Houses. The government instituted Urban Dweller's Association to assist the implementation of this new urban land and housing policies and at the same time charged with acting as local administrative unites and development coordinator among its members of the town (Kassahun, 2007).

The UDAs and PAs had also registered considerable achievements in terms of service delivery. For instance, both the UDAs and PAs contributed immensely to combating illiteracy through the adult literacy campaigns which halved the

illiteracy rate. However, all the advances mentioned above were lamentably short-lived. Soon after their formation the two local institutions (UPAs and PAs) degenerated into apparatuses of repression and terror. The role of the UDAs and the PAs as a means of terror and repression reached its climax when they became involved in the infamous and ghastly "Red Terror" operation through which the Derg set out to eliminate its political opponents through mass killings.

The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), in confirming with the socialist bloc has created a Committee to Organize the Party of the Workers of Ethiopia (COPWE) in 1979. The committee was charged to transform the military rule into civilian rule by constructing the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE), which was the only political party in the country during the Derg Regime, in order to fill the National Shengo, the highest organ, with elected representatives by casting out the militants. Accordingly, by the year 1983, in the second congress session of COPWE, the provisional administration was transferred into Workers Party of Ethiopia. Then four years later in 1987, the Derg devised the new constitution that became an instrument for the birth of

People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE).

The constitution was promulgated by the proclamation No.1/1987 in February and also contained a lot of provisions with regards to local administration. Article 59 affirms the unitary nature of the Ethiopian state while article 61 stipulates the possible existence of many administrative unites as necessary under autonomous regions whose boundary and level of hierarchy determined by law.” The national legislature, National *Shengo*, as the highest organ of the state authorized to establish administrative and autonomous regions, determined, their boundary, level of hierarchy, accountability, and sources of revenue, and enact proclamations by they are administered (Kassahun, 2007).

Another attempt at self-administration under the Derg period was the establishment of autonomous and administrative regions by Proclamation No. 14 of 1987 (PDRE, 1987A). This proclamation was necessitated, by increasing instability, in some provinces of the country notably Eritrea, Dire dhawa, Asseb, Tigray and Ogaden. These regions were given autonomous status while the rest of the country was divided into 24 administrative regions. The autonomous and administrative regions were further

divided into *Awrajas* thus establishing a three-tier division of center, region and *Awraja*. The committee set up for delineating regions used many criteria such as nationality, economic and geographical variables, administrative efficiency, border areas and their political situation (Mulatu, 1990). The application of the criteria, however, was subjective and there was no clear basis for quantifying and weighting them.

The institutional framework of regional administrative power in Ethiopia during the Derg was composed of the *Shengo* and executive committees. The regional *Shengo* was the highest organ of state power in the region and was accountable to the people of the administrative region and the national *Shengo*. Among the powers and duties of the *Shengo* was the responsibility to determine social and economic plans and the budget of the region and implement them when approved by the national *Shengo* (PDRE, 1987).

The executive committee of the autonomous and administrative regions served as the executive and administrative organ with the responsibility to prepare the social and economic plans and the budget of the region and implement them when approved (PDRE, 1987). This

decentralization in Ethiopia lasted for four years from 1987 to 1991, emphasized the importance of nationalities and raised the consciousness of minority nationalities. The decentralization, however, was not able to address important aspects such as fiscal decentralization and as a result was not able to give the people the power to determine their own social and economic affairs. Similarly by eliminating the lowest administrative unit, the *Woreda*, the decentralization removed governance from the local people.

The Derg's villagization programme was also the other decentralization effort, but control-oriented project for which local officials were found handy. The villagization program involved the resettlement of peasants into centralized villages. The programme necessitated the forceful removal of peasants from their birthplaces to remote areas. The declared policy reason of the Derg for the villagization program was to make service delivery to the peasants convenient. The true motive was, however, creating a convenient way of controlling the peasants.

2.3. Administrative Decentralization and Local Governance in EPRDF

After the down fall of Derg from its power in the year 1991, the Ethiopian People

Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), spearheaded by the Tigrian People's Liberation Front (TPLF), came to seize political power in Ethiopia after two decades of horrendous civil war (Paulos, 2011). With the coming of EPRDF lots of political changes were attempted in the country among which, decentralization instead of centralization, federalism instead of unitarism, democracy instead of dictatorship, command or mixed economy to market economy and parallel to this, so many social changes were also introduced. Shortly after controlling Addis Ababa the EPRDF, with the other nationalist movements, convened "the Peaceful and Democratic Transitional Conference of Ethiopia" (Kinfu, 1994). The Conference adopted a "Transitional Period Charter" (TPC) that served as a constitution until the promulgation of the 1995 Constitution. The TPC recognized the right to self-determination of each ethnic group of the country. It also authorized each ethnic group to establish self-government starting from district level. Accordingly, five regional states have established special zones and special districts to provide territorial autonomy to the ethnic minorities that are found within their jurisdiction.

By so doing the TPC began the first phase of the decentralization process in the country. This phase of the decentralization process came to an end in 1995 when the current Constitution (FDRE Constitution) was promulgated which introduced an ethnic-based federal system to Ethiopia (Assefa, 2007). Accordingly, nine regional states and two city administrations were established.

The delimitation of regions is based on ethnic identity, language, consent, and settlement pattern. This reorganization of regions was the first drives of EPRDF for devolving the powers and functions from the central government to the regional units and this process also deserved the first phase in the decentralization efforts of the EPRDF government that lasted from 1992-2002 (Hashim, 2010). The first phase was concentrating on creating and empowering national and regional governments by equipping them with legislative, judiciary and executive branches. This wave of decentralization can be seen as a “Big Push” or “Big Band” decentralization as a substantial amount of resources and responsibilities were being transferred from the national government to the regional order (Tegegne and Dickovick, 2010). In this phase, the transitional government in advancing

political decentralization has made some sort of elections in 1992 and 1995. In fact the elections made during these periods were considered as unfair where by some political parties were withdrew from the election campaigns and EPRDF with its monopolistic power won the election and assumed political power (Vestal, 1999).

The 1995 constitution article 50/4 underlines the constitution of different autonomous administrative units that are used for tilting the power from the center to the lower administrative organs. Accordingly, article 50/4 of the constitution says that “States shall be organized at the state and district level. State Parliament, may, while organizing its administration, include other administrative hierarchies. Sufficient power shall be given to organs at a lower level to allow for direct popular participation”. It prescribes to the regional states how to establish and adequately empower local government.

The constitution identified five tiers of administrative hierarchies starting from the Central Government (Federal Government) to regional, zonal, district and the *Kebele* level administration. In the first phases the lower administrative organs means that the districts and *Kebeles* were not given sufficient and autonomous powers, and resources, but in

the second phase of decentralization districts and lower administrative units are said to be better equipped as DLDP was aimed to devolve powers and functions further to these units (Hashim, 2010). The regional government has given the responsibility to devolve its considerable portions of their experienced manpower to *Woredas* or districts by scaling down the role and function of the zone, which is assumed to be an intermediary between the district and region. Right from that moment the district has given planning and implementing responsibility based on the resources available under their jurisdiction without seeking authorization from some higher administrations (Tegegne and Dickovick, 2010).

The second phase of decentralization began after a poverty reduction and development policy was adopted by the federal government in 2001. Decentralization was chosen as a key mechanism for the implementation of this policy (SPRDP, 2002). It was, thus, decided that rural districts and city administrations would be authorized to exercise a certain measure of political, administrative and financial powers. With a declared intention of implementing this policy, the regional states amended their constitutions one after the other starting

from 2001. The regional states also enacted statutes to restructure their urban local governance system in line with the policy.

Nonetheless, as it is argued here, an overall observation of the constitutional and legal framework regulating local government reveals that local government is not adequately institutionalized to exist as an autonomous level of government. Indeed, to the contrary, some explicit and implicit provisions in the regional constitutions and statutes render local government a subsidiary structure whose function is limited to implementing centrally adopted policies. Moreover, according to Zemelak (2011), due to inadequate finance, not only is the responsiveness of local government to local priorities stifled, but local authorities are also forced to resort to the age-old tradition of extracting contribution from local people in cash, in kind and labour. Furthermore, local government remains the institution which is used to keep political opponents at bay.

2.3.1. District Level Decentralization Program (DLDP) in Oromiya Regional State

Among the nine regional governments, that are 'relatively autonomous' in that they are elected bodies and have the power

to make legislation and policy decisions regarding many activities, Oromiya regional state is the one. Like other regions, Oromiya regional state is guaranteed with powers by FRDE constitution under article 52. The activities within the powers of the regional governments includes: Establishing regional administration on the basis of self-determination and establishing a democratic system; formulating and executing the regional constitution; formulating and executing the economic and social development policies and strategies; administering land and natural resources on the basis of the federal law; determining taxes and collecting revenue from regional sources; formulating and executing laws concerning civil servants administration and work conditions in the region; and maintaining peace and order in the region and establishing regional police forces (FDRE, 1995).

District level decentralization program (DLDP) is another major important move for further devolving powers, functions and resources to the district levels. Like in other regions, in Oromiya too, districts are the most important institutions established to exercise autonomous power next to the regional units. Even though they are not established by the federal constitution

itself, the regional constitutions have provided a lot of provisions about the existence, power and functions of districts (Tegegne and Dickovick, 2010).

The Oromiya regional state, with 359,619.8 square kilometer area, is the largest state in Ethiopia. It constitutes around 30% of the country's total area. The regional state is contiguous with all but the Tigray regional state (The Oromiya State Government, 2013). It is also the most populous region in the country. The population in the region is estimated around 27, 158,471. Around 87 percent of the people in the regional state are Oromo. A number of other ethnic minorities also reside in the region (FDRE Population Census Commission, 2007).

Structurally, government in the Oromiya regional state is organized at regional, zonal, district and *Ganda (kebele)* level (Art 45 of the Oromia Regional State (ORS) Constitution 2001). The Oromiya regional administration has a Regional Council, a Regional Administrative Council and a judicial body.

The region is divided into 19 zones (including Finfine surrounding zone), 256 rural districts and 39 urban districts. Each district is also divided into a number of *kebeles*. The zone administration is the representative of the regional government

at zone level (Art 71 of the ORS Constitution 2001). Therefore, the regional state can be said to have only two-tiered local governance system. For the purpose of this study, discussion is only focused on district administration.

2.3.2. Administrative Structures and Mandates of Districts Governments in Oromiya Regional State

To accommodate the decentralized power and functions, district administrations needs to be redefined. To this end, the Oromiya Regional State (ORS) constitution has specified the structures, powers and functions of district administration. Accordingly, the regional constitution in chapter nine from article 76 to 88 illustrates the authorities, the powers and functions of district administration. According to article 76 of the regional constitution, district administration comprises three important organs: District Council, District Administrative Council and District Judicial organ. For the purpose of this study, only district council and district administrative council are discussed in line with their powers and functions.

District Council and Its Mandates

Structurally, the district council consists of three bodies. These are speaker of district

council, deputy speaker of district council and four standing committees such as Human Resource Development and Socio-economic Affairs standing committee, Legal, Justice and Administrative Affairs standing committee, Women, Children and Youth Affairs standing committee, and Finance and Budget Affairs standing committee.

According to article 77 of the ORS constitution, district council is a council organized below the 'Caffee'. This organ shall be a council comprising of representatives of the people in each kebele. In addition, it shall designate speaker and deputy speaker from among members of the political party or a coalition of political parties that have majority vote. It shall also establish permanent and ad hoc committees as may be necessary. According to article 78, members of district council shall be elected directly by the people from residents of each kebele found in the district.

The regional constitution in its article 79 clearly identified the powers and duties of district council. The constitution grants district council the highest authority within the district. According to article 79 (2), the council have the power to deliberate up on and approve plans and programs with

regard to economic development, social services and public administration of the district. In addition, it shall oversee that activities of basic agricultural development is undertaken within the time set and natural resources development, preservation and maintenance is accomplished by giving due attention to it in the district. It has also the duties to create conducive situations to mobilize and activate the populace for development activities; ensure proper collection of land use taxes, agricultural product income taxes, and similar other taxes as determined by law; adopt its internal rules of procedure; and issue directives and implement the same to ensure the maintenance of peace and security.

District Administrative Council and Its Mandates

According to article 84 (1) of the ORS constitution, district administrative council is the executive organ of the district and is accountable to the administrator and district council. In addition, article 84 (2) says “district administrative council comprises the district administrator, deputy administrator and also the heads of the main sectoral executive offices found in the district”.

Moreover, according to article 85 (1), district administrative council have the

powers and duties to implement the policies, laws, directives, plans and programs of the state in the district; coordinate, supervise and lead activities of the executive organs found in the district, prepare annual budget draft and submit it to the district council, implement same up on approval; maintain peace and security in the district and direct the district police and security force as well as coordinate their function; prepare plans for social services, economic development and administration and submit same to the district council for approval; protect, preserve and develop the natural resource; mobilize the populace for development activities; oversee that cultural heritage have the necessary preservation and protection; and discharge other functions assigned to it by the district council and regional administrative council. In the exercise of state function, members of the district administrative council are collectively responsible for their decisions (ORS constitution, 2001).

3. Research Methodology

There is a common saying in choosing research methods and techniques which says “the problem at hand dictates the method” (Yin, 2003). As far as the research design of the study is concerned, this research was more of qualitative and

also utilized quantitative approach, and hence mixed method was chosen. According to American Educational Research Association, mixed methods research will be successful as more investigators study and help advance its concepts and as they regularly practice it (Johson and Onwwuebuzie, 2009). A key feature of mixed methods research is its methodological pluralism or eclecticism, which frequently results in superior research (compared to mono-method research).

In line with the aim of the study, qualitative part of mixed method was employed to provide an insight in to the phenomenon of local governance from the perspectives of administrative decentralization. To support the choice of qualitative approach, Flick (2009) holds the view that qualitative method is most effective to investigate the participants' perspective and view points on particular topic. In fact, qualitative approach is the best for this study for two major reasons. Primarily, it is preferred to exploit an in-depth qualitative analysis of the effect of administrative decentralization in improving quality of local governance. Second, given the complex nature of phenomenon under study, qualitative

approach can better enable the researcher to bring participants' voice to the study and thus gain deeper insights in to their experiences of local governance. Hence, this was chosen for its convenience to help in identifying the nature and sources of problems and their consequences. However, as pointed out by Johson and Onwwuebuzie (2009), this method has its own limitations. For instance, knowledge produced may not generalize to other people or other setting (i.e. findings may be unique to the relatively few people included in the research study). Worst of all, the results are more easily influenced by the researcher's personal bias and idiosyncrasies.

To minimize the biases as well as to infer context free generalizations, quantitative method was also mixed with qualitative method. Therefore, mixed methods research draw from strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both in this study in such a way that it enable to collect multiple data using different strategies, approaches and methods which result in complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses.

3.1 Population, Sampling Design and Sampling Techniques

The sample design involves the selection of sample area and population. The sample area is taken from 10 districts of Horro Guduru Wollega Zone (HGWZ), which is Horro district. The study takes only one district because of time and financial limitations. The reason why the study area is chosen is that as compared with other districts of HGWZ, the area has low performance in service delivery such as health coverage, road construction, agricultural extension service and clean water that indicates local governance challenges. Horro district has 22 rural *Kebeles* and 1 urban *Kebele*. The sampling techniques which were used are systematic sampling and purposive sampling. Purposive sampling technique was used to choose *Kebeles* of the study area. Accordingly, four *Kebeles* are chosen based on the availability of facilities and easy transportations. At the same time,

systematic sampling technique was used to identify the sample individuals for administrating questionnaires. Apart from this, purposive sampling technique was also applied in identifying the key informants who take part in interviews with those who have administrative power, and a certain degree of knowledge and information about local governance and administrative decentralization.

3.1.1 Sample Size Determination

For the sake of cost and time saving, it is very vital and usual as well to take a representative portion of the unit of study. The research division of National Education Association in the article “Small Sample Techniques,” has published a formula for determining sample size in 1960. Thus, the researcher used the following formula to determine the sample size for this inquiry. The formula was selected purposively as it helps to have a minimum sample size.

$$s = X^2 N P (1 - P) \div d^2 (N - 1) + X^2 P (1 - P)$$

Where, s = required sample size.

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population variability (assumed to be .10 since the population is almost homogeneous in terms of achieving services and administered under the same district).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

The total population of the study (N) is 2,650, among which the Population of Haro Aga *Kebele* (N_1) = 760, the population of Sekela *Kebele* 01 (N_2) = 920, the population of Gudina Abuna *Kebele* (N_3) = 550 and the population of Gitilo Dale *kebele* is (N_4) = 420. S (Total number of sample) =? X^2 = at 95% level of confidence is 3.841, d = 5% or 0.05 and $P=0.10$. In this study, the total population represents house hold heads of sample *Kebeles*. Therefore, using the above formula,

$$S = \frac{(3.841)(2,650)(0.1)(0.9)}{0.05^2(2,650-1)+(3.841)(0.1)(0.9)} = 131(\text{approximately})$$

On the other hand, to determine the number of sample (respondents) in each *Kebele* (n_x) the following formula was used.

$$n_x = s (N_x/N)$$

Where, n_x = required sample size at each *Kebele*.

s = total sample size

N_x = total population (House hold heads) at each *Kebele*

N = total population size

Thus, $n_1 = s (N_1/N)$ and hence $n_1 = 131(760/2,650) = 38$; $n_2 = s (N_2/N)$, and hence $n_2 = 131(920/2,650) = 45$; $n_3 = s (N_3/N)$, and hence $n_3 = 131(550/2,650) = 27$; and $n_4 = s (N_4/N)$, and hence $n_4 = 131 (420/2650) = 21$

<i>Kebeles</i>	Total population (HHh)	Sample population
Haro Aga	760	38
Sekela 01	920	45
Gudina Abuna	550	27
Gitilo Dale	420	21
Total	2,650	131

*HHh- House Hold heads

Hence, from Haro Aga *Kebele* 38 respondents; from Sekela 01*Kebele* 45 respondents; from Gudina Abuna *Kebele* 27 respondents; and from Gitilo Dale *Kebele* 21 respondents are selected

proportionally. Then, each respondent from each *Kebele* was selected by using systematic sampling from the list recorded at each *Kebele*. In addition, 10 respondents were selected purposively for interview

from government officials of Horro district and civic associations, and hence the total sample size was 141.

3.2 Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

Both secondary and primary sources of data were utilized in this research to gather the necessary information as per the requirements. To achieve the above issues and objectives, a brief review of literature (secondary data) was made in relation to the subject matter. This includes review of relevant books, journals, annual reports, federal and regional constitutions and strategies, past researches, plan documents, and published reports of the case under consideration.

Primary data was also obtained by using observation, questionnaire and semi-structured interview with key informants. To this end, primary data collection techniques will be structured as follows.

- **Interview:** To assess the quality of local governance in depth and to dig out a wide range of opinions, attitudes, feelings or perceptions from respondents, semi-structured interviews was made with key informants. According to Hull (1985), semi-structured interview is an open situation and so having greater flexibility and freedom. Although research questions determine the questions to be asked, their content, sequence and wording are entirely left to the interviewer. Key informants were a focus of the study due to their stipulation of richest information, and include district administrative

council, members of district council, and civic association leaders. These key informants were selected purposively based on their political and social positions, responsibilities and proximity to the governing processes of the area. Moreover, the informants were also assumed to have the necessary knowledge regarding administrative decentralization and local governance. As such 10 respondents were selected purposively for interview, and the data secured from interviewees was taken through tape, video recorder and note book.

- **Questionnaire:** It is the second important data collecting methods in this study. Well designed questionnaire was prepared, translated in to Afan Oromo and distributed to the peoples of selective sample *Kebeles*. As such, both open-ended and close-ended questions was distributed, and filled by respondents, and in some cases, by enumerators who were specially appointed for the purpose. This way of collecting data is known as “schedule” in some book like Kothari (2004). The enumerators are given a deep understanding of the nature and scope of the investigation thoroughly so that they understand the implications of different questions. The advantage of this technique is that enumerators explain the aims and objects of the investigation and also remove the

difficulties which any respondent may feel in understanding. Non-response is generally very low in case of schedules because these are filled by enumerators. Moreover, the information can be gathered even when the respondents happen to be illiterate. Accordingly, 131 questionnaires were distributed for 131 respondents through enumerators.

- **Observation:** Non participant observations was carried out in different offices the district in order to see how the sectors deliver services, how do they record data, how do they disseminate information to public and considering the overall conditions of offices. Since the researcher was grown in the district, it makes easy to observe the persisting activities of local governance in the district.

On the other hand, secondary data was collected by technically scrutinizing relevant information's from written materials on the issue under study.

3.3 Methods of Data analysis

The collected data were organized, analyzed, discussed and interpreted in descriptive way. The perceptions, reactions and opinions of respondents and other description of information which was obtained through observation, open-ended questionnaire and interview with key informants were paraphrased, discussed and interpreted qualitatively. On the other hand, some quantitative information's which was gathered from close-ended questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively

supported with descriptive statistical tools like frequencies, mean and standard deviation. The calculations of the above statistics were done with the use of SPSS version 16.0. After the data was analyzed, the study comes up with general conclusion by using inductive reasoning from the samples which are included into the study area in general.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Stakeholders' Participation in Local Governance

Jennings (2000) defines participation as "involvement by a local population and, at times, additional stakeholders in the creation, content and conduct of a program or policy designed to change their lives". Stakeholders are persons or groups with a common interest in a particular action and its consequences and or who are affected by it. According to Midgley *et al* (1986) the notion of popular participation and that of community participation are interlinked. The former is concerned with the broad issues of social development and the creation of opportunities for the involvement of people in the political, economic and social life of a nation, the latter suggests the direct involvement of ordinary people in local affairs. Decentralization is a primary method for involvement of stakeholders as it shares some powers and functions to various groups for self-rule. Having these scenarios in mind, the researcher needs to discuss stakeholders' participation in local governance in Horro district.

Stakeholders' participation is one of the indicators used for evaluating the improvement of local governance in a

certain area under decentralized system. For the purpose of this study, People/community, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and private sector were selected as major stakeholders in local governance of the study area. A thorough study has been made to understand and explain how well the community, CSOs and the private sector participate in matters that affect their present and future lives. Under this study, political participation (mainly focused on people's participation on elections); people, CSOs and private sector participation in development (mutually and/or individually); and people's participation in local administration have been used to measure stakeholders' participation.

The involvement of citizens in the political process is an essential part of democracy in which it allows to pass a decision. To ensure strong participation of citizens in local governance, citizens need to understand and want to exercise their right to participate in local political issues such as electing their representatives based on their consent. They need to feel confident and know where and how to participate while local institutions should be prepared to facilitate the citizen participation. Engaging citizens in local governance improves accountability and the ability of local authorities to solve problems, creates more inclusive and cohesive communities, and increases the number and quality of initiatives made by communities.

4.1.1. Political Participation

Table 4.6: Participation on Local Election and *Kebele* affairs

Item	Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
1) Did you participate in local elections?	Yes	117	89.3
	No	14	10.7
	Total	131	100.0
2) Do you participate in <i>Kebele</i> affairs?	Yes	69	52.7
	No	62	47.3
	Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

As depicted in the above table (item 1), majority of the respondents which accounts 89.3% have participation on local elections. On the other hand, 10.7% respondents responded that they do not participate on local elections. For the

purpose of this study, local elections used to mean elections taken place below *Kebele*, at *Kebele* and district. From the table, by using the highest percentage, it can be concluded that majority of the people participates on electing their

representatives at local levels. For those who say “yes”, there is another question on credibility of election. Accordingly, majority of the respondents do not agree with the exercise of free and fair election at local level. For instance, they replied, “... people participate only on Election Day with a less mandate to control a counting process”. This shows that, people simply cast their votes, but do not follow up whether their vote is changed in to voice (seat) or not. Because people were not aware of the process taken place before and after election.

As an extension of this question, for respondents who say “no”, there was another question to know the reason why they did not participate. As such, the respondents’ response on perception and participation of people in elections do not show much confirmation on democratic election exercises. Some of them replied, “... Power holders are those who have intimate relation and strong political commitment in view of higher level officials, not to the people”. This shows wrong understandings that peoples’ participation on local election does not make change, because they perceive as votes of ordinary people do not make the elected person to wield power. Such misunderstanding limits the participation of people on local elections. Worst of all, neither the ruling party nor opposing parties elect their candidates through universal suffrage. Candidates are predetermined, and people have no alternative to elect their preferred representatives.

In fact, nomination is always top-down. One good practice by current government

is the prior discussion on the degree to which candidates are accepted by the constituencies (something like vote of confidence). This is practiced first in the absence of the candidates and finally presenting them directly to the public in some selected centers. Even though people have little to say against, the opportunity and the simulation is a good beginning. The observation shows that still only a few people understand the constitution, the election process and its outcomes.

On the other hand, as it can be observed from the same table (item 2), 52.7% of the respondents replied that they participate in *Kebele* affairs, and the rest 47.3% respondents do not participate in *Kebele* affairs. As part of political process, participating in *Kebele* affairs is an important element. Participation in *Kebele* affairs, for the purpose of this study, means taking part in implementing laws and other activities at *Kebele* level by leading the grass root people. This can be expressed by performing official duties like *Kebele* council, *Kebele* administrative council, social court and other functions such as *militia*. This is part of self-rule endorsed by administrative decentralization. Therefore, using the highest percentage, the researcher concluded that, majority of the respondents do have a participation in *Kebele* affairs.

At district level, according to data obtained from interviewees, participation in district affairs is relatively high as compared to at *Kebele* levels. This can be manifested through participating on the planning, implementation and control of policies and strategies.

The other important mechanism through which political participation manifested is meeting. In a country where democracy is practiced, people regularly meet as per their structure to solve problems, to pass a

decision, to discuss on a given issue and so on. In Horro district, the time frames of meeting on local issues were discussed as follows.

Table 4.7: Meetings to discuss on local issues

	Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
How often do you meet for discussion on local affairs?	Weekly	18	13.7
	Monthly	87	66.4
	Annually	13	9.9
	Never	13	9.9
	Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

As indicated in the above table, 13.7% of the respondents said that people meet to discuss on local affairs weekly. Whereas majority of the respondents which accounts 66.4% responded that people monthly meet for discussion on local affairs. Concomitantly, 9.9 % of respondents replied that their participation on local issue is once per year, and the rest 9.9% never participated on local affairs.

The interviewees have confessed that there is a motive of awareness creation on meeting through which local people can discuss on their own affairs. And, when need arise; there are trainings to encourage peoples' participation on meetings to discuss on local issues such as crime prevention, forest resource conservation, and land degradation protection.

On the other hand, in my experience as a resident of the study area, I observed the decrement of people's participation on meeting to deal with local issues. Traditionally, people in Horro district have

intimate contact to deal on local issues such as conflict resolution through *Jarsummaa* (traditional conflict resolution mechanism in which conflicts are solved by the elders), crime prevention, environmental issues, and even they drank coffee with more than five household neighbors'. Such intimate relations necessitate them to formulate and execute collective action at local level -- through informal meeting. For instance, drinking coffee with neighbors pave the way for local individuals' to discuss on their issues comprehensively as they meet each other daily. As such, there was strong social capital in which norms of trust and reciprocity enacted in every individuals heart. However, currently the norms of individualism were developing due to rising expensive living conditions and greedy for wealth with in some individuals. As such, nobody wants to have intimate relation with neighborhoods; rather everybody is surrounded by implicit and explicit competition with each other. Instead of *Jarsummaa*, they prefer court

for every single case, which in turn negatively affect their cooperation. These make local people reluctant to local meetings and handicapped local governance.

On the other hand, one of the interviewee from civic associations spelled out that formal meetings are organized by the government for the purpose of imposing what was said and planned by the ruling party without considering the situation and living conditions of the people. Since the living styles of majority of the residents are farmers, meetings should be organized by taking in to account seasons when farmers become free. Due to this situation, even if the government calls meetings on autumn, summer and spring when farmers are too busy, peoples are not ready to participate in discussions. In addition, sometimes people might not attend the meetings because of the biased idea that the government will not consider their opinions. They prefer to keep quiet particularly for issues related to politics and governance.

4.1.2. Participation in Development Activities

In order to facilitate development works, decentralization and empowerment of local government are important elements as they enhance development and service delivery to the public at large (Mulugeta, 2012). The present development policy of Ethiopia gives due attention to 'participatory development'. It was marked with increased focus on strategies such as public -private partnerships, establishment of regional networks, development of industrial clusters, and

enhancement of human capital as an engine to development. However, there is still a heated debate over the importance, extent and practicality of participatory approaches to development. With this background, based on the empirical data obtained, the researcher tries to explain community participation through different associations in development activities and the inputs of DLDP to this process in the study area.

Public Participation: In principle, the communities in the districts have the right to participate in every step of development starting from problem identification, inception of ideas, planning, and approval of projects, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. If so then working together could have built their capacities at grass roots level and inculcated ownership. Public participation on development activities can be taken place individually or in group. Individually, a person can participate in development activities by contributing resources to development projects, by working hard to change its way of life and so on. In group, people can also participate on development activities by forming associations, unions, and institutions and cooperatives. For the purpose of this study, the latter were used to measure public participation in development activities.

Table 4.8: Grass root organization's participation on local issues

Item	Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
Do grass root organizations like <i>Iddir</i> participate on local issues?	Yes	129	98.5
	No	2	1.5
	Total	131	100.0

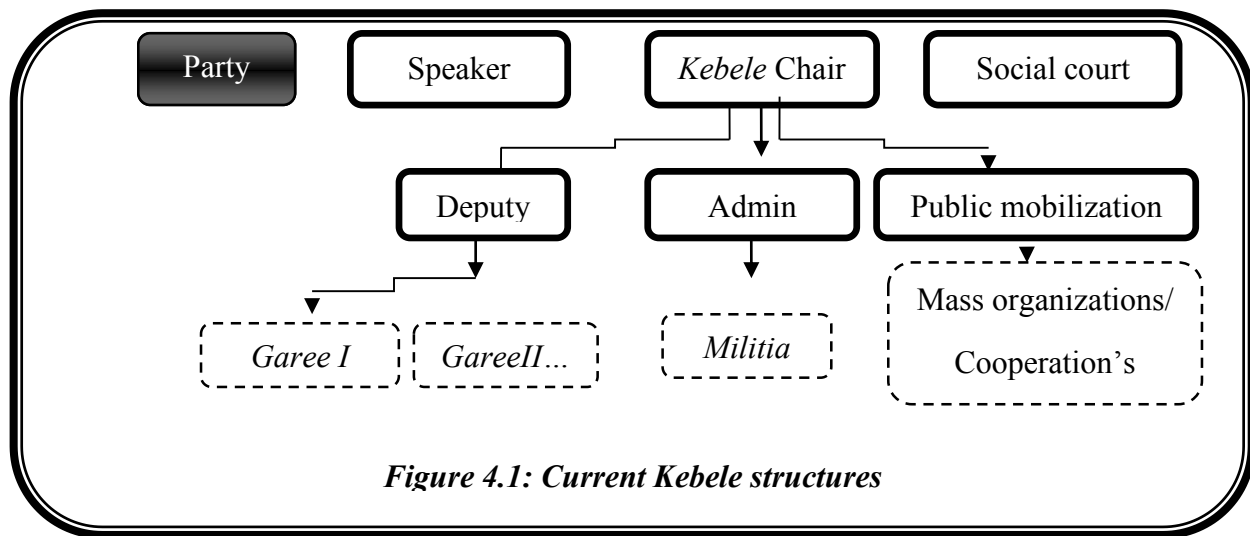
Source: Own survey, 2014

As depicted from the above table, 98.5% of the respondents said that grass root organizations like *Iddir* have participation on local issues. Whereas only 1.5% of respondents replied as there is no participation of such public institutions on local affairs. By using the largest percentage indicated in the table, it can be concluded that community based institutions have great participation on local issues.

Iddir is an indigenous voluntary association. In their not so long history, *Iddirs* have spread throughout Ethiopia so rapidly that it is now unthinkable to imagine a village without *Iddir* with the exception of remote areas. *Iddir* is the most widespread association but its composition, system, approach and size may differ from place to place. But all over *Iddir* is community oriented and mostly religiously and ethnically

heterogeneous unless the vicinity is homogenous. They have a high level of participation (Dejene, 2003) and promote self-esteem as each with his/her minor tasks counts (Alemayehu, 1968). They are also egalitarian and transparent (Dejene 2003). In Horro district, *Iddir* exists as a traditional community based organization, and currently it is recognized by the government as a typical development actor.

According to interviewee from district administration, in addition to *Iddir*, there are another mass organizations and associations formally instituted by the government in accordance with the objectives of DLDP. The interviewee imagined the following structure of society below *kebele* level. Among others, the focus of this study is on *gares* (small group).



Source: Adoted and modified from Mulugeta, 2012

The Gares: The Oromo language word 'gare' refers to the collection of people as a group according to their proximity at local level. The system is recently developed by the ruling party as 'development agent'. The idea of organizing gares (5 - 25 members) is mainly to exercise planning, to develop work ethic and to increase productivity through support and experience sharing with one another. These task forces are organized in each zone (lower structure of a Kebele sometimes known as *Gotti*) based on neighborhood and their specialties. Specialties include: Merchant, grain producers, small scale enterprises government employees. There are areas where this system has worked better. But from the researcher observation in the Horro district, in all the three selected rural Kebeles, there have been no significant results that prove their success. People consider them as superimposed structures to scrutinize on the activities of people. Only in one town Kebele (i.e Sekela 01), the researcher observed the relative

function and acceptance of such structures by the people.

The key informants, from district council, said that, "it is through these gares that the Kebele administration performs all its activities". When there are new orders from the government, they use these structures to reach each household. They also use them for the collection of tax, government debts and other contributions. These structures were started before the introduction of the DLDP, and mainly focused on securing peace and tranquility and for the purpose of election. Currently, after the introduction of the DLDP, there have been attempts to activate them as a primary structure for area of development planning, implementation and control. The development agents also use them separately as models of production units. Unlike the structure in Figure (4.1) depicts, though it appears that they are only responsible to the deputy chairperson, who is in charge of all development activities, they also take orders from other officials.

The preparation of the *Kebele* development plan hypothetically starts from the individual household. *Gares* help individuals to develop their annual plans. *Gares* are also thought to be forums for various kinds of training, where extension agents meet farmers at work sites. The training encompasses hygiene and sanitation, natural resources conservation and proper utilization – which are about forest management, land management, protection of grazing in the reserve forests, agriculture, home economics and various

other socio-economic activities. In short, it is through *Kebele* and its structures (*gares*) the district contact local people.

Another important issue raised here is the mechanism by which such institutions, associations and/or grass root organizations participate in local affairs. For the purpose of this study, resource mobilization, contribution to development activities, meeting and emergency support are used to identify their means of participation.

Table 4.9: Ways of grass root organization's participation

Item	Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
Through what ways do grass root organizations participate on local issues?	Resource mobilization	41	31.3
	Development activities	22	16.8
	Emergency support	45	34.4
	Meeting	23	17.6
	Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

From the above table, 31.3% and 16.8% of respondents responded that resource mobilization and contribution to development activities are the usual mechanism by which grass root organizations participate on local issues respectively. Resources may be mobilized in cash such as paying tax, giving money in support of development projects, and in kind such as contributing construction materials to the projects. Such participation enhances local development - the goal of local governance. Whereas, majority of the respondents which accounts 34.4% said that, the participation of public institutions on local issues mainly manifested by emergency support,

and rest 17.6% said that public institutions participates on local issues by organizing different meetings.

Furthermore, key informants from civic associations informed that, “since the formation of such community based institution is in accordance with the proximity of local people to each other, it is easy for them to support and engage with each other during emergency period such as funeral, fire accident, and to enjoy on weeding and other celebrations”. Hence, each individual is organized either according to their *Iddir* or *gare* are responsible to participate on each other's cases when need arise. These helps to build strong cooperation, which in turn

promotes local governance through collective actions.

Table 4.10: Time frame of public participation on development activities

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Mean	Standard deviation
Valid	Always	29	22.1	1.80	.454
	Sometimes	99	75.6		
	Never	3	2.3		
	Total	131	100.0		

Source: Own survey, 2014

In the above table, the respondents were asked to indicate how many times they do participate on common development projects at their *kebele*. As depicted from the above table, majority of the respondents which accounts 75.6%, with a mean value (mean= 1.80, SDV= .454), said that they sometimes participate on common development activities. Whereas, 22.1% of the respondents responded their participation is always, and the rest 2.3% replied as they never participated on local common development activities. In support of this, one of the interviewee confirmed that, "... there is a dramatic change in terms of public participation as compared to previous regimes. Many people become conscious and active participant on the concerned issues. However, still it is too suspicious to conclude public participation is already improved and no person left behind". As such, improving public participation towards common development projects at local level is an important issue which needs greater attention.

Despite, in order to encourage the participation of grass root people, the *Kebele* and district governments use different mechanisms. For the purpose this study, rewarding, empowering to office position and certifying good deeds are used to measure the efforts of *Kebele* and districts effort while striving to encourage public participation.

Table 4.11: Efforts to Encourage public participation

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Giving reward	12	9.2
	Giving power	15	11.5
	Certifying good deeds	104	79.4
	Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

In the above table, the respondents' are asked to indicate the efforts of administrators in improving and promoting public participation. Accordingly, 9.2% of respondents replied that *Kebele* and district use rewards for active participants from local people in order to promote and improve public participation. This mechanism is used not only at *Kebele* and district level, but also at regional and federal level, since good performers from local people are awarded under the slogan of "development heroes". On the other hand, 11.5% of respondents responded that giving position (empowering to office) is the means by which the local governments attempts to encourage public participation. Concomitantly, majority of the respondents which accounts 79.4% replied that, certifying good deeds is the way in which the *Kebele* and district administrations are attempting to improve public participations on local development activities.

In addition, the interviewees from district council confirmed the above stated actions are used to enhance active participation. Most of the time certifying good deeds is preferred as a simple but motivational mechanism. Good performers are awarded a certificate which shows their success. Supposedly, when an individual is

certified as an exemplary and good doer, it develops envy in another person to achieve the post. Accordingly, it necessitates some sort of competition which reflects active participation.

Despite these efforts, the reality on the ground reveals that communities at *Kebele* level in particular, and district level in general, are not fully participating in the development of their own vicinity. Mulugeta (2012) identifies that, they (local peoples) are not fully informed of what the district administration is planning or doing rather in some places they watch all the development endeavors of the district. Administrators often notify the communities the plans developed in offices without consulting them during the planning process. Hence, if local governments want to encourage participation of local people, they have to start from the beginning such as involving them in local development planning rather than notifying the end result.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Participation: Well defined by Diamond (1994), the term in a broad sense encompasses a wide range of societal organizations covering a variety of interests in diverse forms and at different levels. With this understanding, perhaps

we can categorize CSOs into two: those which emerge with current understanding of CSOs and those indigenous institutions under different names, that have for a long

time been practiced by Ethiopian people all over the country. In Horro district, to some extent, there exists the latter categories of CSOs.

Table 4.12: Participation of CSO

Item	Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
Are there civil society organizations in your <i>Kebele</i> ?	yes	127	96.9
	No	4	3.1
	Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

As indicated in the above table, 96.9% of respondents assure the existence of CSO in their *Kebele*, and the rest 3.1% respondents answered the absence of CSO. In the district under study, there are indigenous youth, farmer, women associations organized with little capital and insufficient skilled man power at local level. Despite, there is only a single NGO. But the activity of this NGO is too passive, and no one expects (even too many people do not know its existence) its contribution as it do not have close relation with grass root people. In this regard, the interviewees have confessed that the engagements of CSOs on local developments are too low in Horro district as compared to other districts. The indigenous civic associations are not effective to operate and achieve the expected out come. They lack both adequate financial and human resources.

According to data obtained from the interviewees, at district level compared to other areas, officials are not good at attracting NGOs to their area. They do not include CSOs in their annual preparation of plans and review meetings. In addition, the 2009 CSO proclamation adopted by

EPRDF government strictly limits the participation of CSOs at all parts of the country. However, as discussed under the theory of new development administration in chapter two, the contribution of traditional associations and CSOs in effectively promoting development is more preferable than central and local government institutions. Involving the CSOs in political activities is absolutely unthinkable, but they could at least contribute on an advisory basis in the area of economic and social development.

In point of fact, poor communication facilities, lacks of suitable road that interconnect *Kebeles* in the district and shortage of other infrastructures are also a limiting factor for engagement of many NGOs. Not only Horro district, but also Horro Guduru Wollega zone is the only zone in Oromiya regional which does not have asphalt road. Government officials said that such poor infrastructures are remained unresolved due to shortage of budget. On contrary, the people argued, it is due to poor governance and inability of officials to enforce development activities. Despite its cause, such poor infrastructure

facilities limit the interest of CSOs to participate in the district.

The Private Sector: The private sector development in Ethiopia is still in its infancy. Most existing private companies are owned and run by family members with ambiguous transactions. The state still owns manufacturing industries such as tanneries, food and beverages, textiles and garments, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and vehicles. In this sector the state accounts for about 60% of total output, and most of the employment (38,000). Although the state lessened its influence in the sector from 86% in 1996 to 53% in 2002, it has remained at this level for a few years, even increasing to 57% in 2004 (IDC, 2005). Of the rest, the significant share is owned by the private sector, domestic and transnational. However, the focus given to this sector, particularly to domestic investors does not match with proposed plans nor what is promoted theoretically; it means there is not much evidence of toeing the anticipated line.

On the other hand there appear efforts, at least at desk level, to narrow the gap, strengthen the private segment and enhance partnership with the public sector. In 2002 a forum called Public -Private Dialogue (PPD) was created by the central government to work closely with the private sector under a conceptual framework termed, "Smart Partnership" (UNDP, 2007). The purpose was to possess shared vision, cooperation and create a win-win partnership between the government and the private sector, through dialogue and reciprocal support. This forum has been further developed and in 2011 a memorandum of understanding was

signed to officially start the joint-consultative forum right away. The problem is that most of the policies and changes of policies come into existence in response to certain pressures (external or internal) and immediately melt away when the push has calmed down.

Within this frame, the condition of the private sector, particularly the domestic entrepreneurs in Horro district is hard to explain. All the government chambers say the right thing, but act the wrong way. According to the data obtained from interviewees, first of all there is no genuine perception and conviction of the importance of the private sector. As such the understanding and space given to this sector is too gloomy. They, the district officials, rush as if they can only build the nation through the government structure alone. Evidently, there is a fear that compels implementers to get closer to local entrepreneurs; not to be suspected as a rent-seeker. Apart from this there are individual implementers' weaknesses and gaps in understanding the importance of the private sector in local development. This condition sometimes leads to believe what some politicians say -- that it is deliberate conspiracy to weaken the indigenous growing force. All these factors hinder the growth of the private sector by narrowing the transaction scale.

According to the key informants', in Horro district, let alone down to the tiers in the *Kebele*, even at the district level, the attention and support given to this sector is almost none existent. One recent intervention is micro-finance activity in the area. The micro-finance institutions, especially Oromiya Credit and Saving

Share Company (OCSSCO) and Wasasa micro-finance institution give short term loans for purchase of fertilizers, selected seed and other livestock based activities for farmers. In this regard some have used the opportunity well; others have extravagates the money and involved their families in a very serious crisis.

Besides the very limited practices of people in utilizing loans, savings and insurance facilities, they (micro-finances)

power and resources were more motivated to extend governing authority down to local levels which helps local people to participate in administration. In addition, the stated aims of district decentralization give more emphasis on participatory governance. This is what Fumihiko Saito remarked on his account about decentralization as in today's world, "...decentralization, particularly by enlarging citizen participation in decision making came to be seen as a driving force

Item	Responses	Frequency	Valid percent
1) Are there any changes in <i>kebele</i> and district administration after 1991?	Yes	131	100.0
	No	0	0
	Total	131	100.0

operate only in very limited areas, with inadequate capital and limited technical support.

4.1.3. Participation in Administration

Tegegne and Dickovick (2010) stated the reasons for necessity of decentralizing

towards democratization and development" (Saito, 2008). For the purpose of this study, post 1991 changes in administration has been touched and special attention is given to participation in decision making to convey participation in administration in Horro district.

Table 4.13: Post 1991 changes in Administration

Source: Own survey, 2014

As clearly shown in the above table, all of the respondents agreed with the existence of change in *Kebele* and district administration after 1991. This shows that decentralization efforts carried out by the EPRDF government embarked to great reform in *Kebele* and district administration. According to data obtained from interviewees, with the coming of current government, there are radical changes in the areas of structural

arrangement in *Kebele* and district administration. New institutions were established and many reforms have been taken place to cope up with smart administration.

As an extension of this question, respondents were asked to spell out the areas of change in *Kebele* and district administration in post 1991. Accordingly, some of them responded that transparency

and accountability are the areas to which reform has been made. While other respondents confirmed improvement of public participation as a result of current decentralization policy. Still, the rest respondents argued improvement in service delivery and decision making respectively. As discussed under theory of participation in the second chapter of this

paper, the strong motive for decentralizing powers and functions to local level is to improve the participation of grass root people. The interviewees also agreed that under the efforts current government for democratization and decentralization policy, the above stated elements are improved.

Table 4.14: Participation on decision making process

Item	Responses	Frequency	Percent
1) Do you participate in decision making process?	Yes	37	28.2
	No	94	71.8
	Total	131	100.0
2) Means of participation	Through representatives	20	54
	Direct participation	10	27
	Through lobbying	7	19
	Total	37	100

Source: Own survey, 2014

Decision making is a process of taking the best option among the alternatives through collective action. Decentralization of decision making makes decisions relevant to the local needs and conditions, encourages commitment from local people, achieves speed and flexibility, encourages local initiatives and places greater responsibility on local leaders. However, as it is clearly indicated in table item 1, the percentages of respondents who answered “Yes” for the question do people participate in decision making process were only 28.2%. While the rest which accounts 71.8% of the respondents replied

as the people did not participate in local decision making process. The interviewees from civic associations also confirmed as majority of the local people do not participate in decision making. Therefore, researcher, having the largest percentage and interviewees argument, concluded that the people did not have active participation in decision making process.

For the respondents who said “no”, there was also additional question to understand why they fail to participate on decision making. They, the respondents, indicated that the cabinets and the members of the councils at district and *Kebele* level

are the exclusive participants in decision making process. A local person hears the final decision after approved by the cabinets. In the same table item 2, as an extension of the first item, respondents who have participation in decision making process were asked to indicate the means of their participation. Accordingly, majority of the respondents which accounts 54% replied that, participation in decision making process is exercised through representatives, while the rest 27% and 19% of respondents confirmed that they have participated directly and through lobbying respectively. Not surprisingly, the present practice of popular participation in Ethiopia is by representatives. In this mode of participation, elected officials may not always represent people's preferences.

Apart from this, the district government has more decision making power than the *Kebeles* have practically. As a result of this, the *Kebele* governments are not able to make decision based on the interests and needs of the people as they are under the domination of the district government. The *Kebele* governments are firmly accountable, transparent and responsive to the district government since they fall under the scrutiny of district government. The district administration to have full effect in the *Kebeles* affairs has appointed the so called *Kebele* managers whereby one *Kebele* assigned with one *Kebele* manager. *Kebele* manager is the only one who is salaried at *Kebele* administrations. The *Kebele* manager has the function to report the day to day activities of the *Kebele* to the district administration in addition to technically supporting the *Kebele*.

Devolving decision making power to the district government is another important opportunity brought by DLDP. The district governments do have the power to decide over matters under their jurisdictions. According to the key informants in the administrative council, before 2001, the district did not have the power to decide over different issues like socio economic condition of the district, but with the promulgation of the district level decentralization the district got the authority to decide on these and other issues. Being the district is given decision making power over its matters, favorable conditions should be created for local government to exercise good governance.

Because devolving decision making authority to the locality creates the chance for the local people to get decision instantly by the nearby government bodies. As a result, it could save the time and transportation costs of the people, which is lost in search of decisions whenever they go to some higher government bodies. However, the practical releases of power compared to the provision in the constitution in Horro district do not permit effective exercise of powers and functions. The interviewee from district administration said that, "... this is mainly due to the fact that shortage of budget and intervention from higher level of government are the main challenges that limit the district's attempt to exercise effective exercise of its powers and functions".

4.2. Local Good Governance and Its Challenges in Horro District

Local good governance means the exercise of good governance at local level. It is not just about providing a range of local services but also about preserving the life and liberty of residents, creating space for democratic participation and civic dialogue, supporting environmentally sustainable local development, and facilitating outcomes that enrich the quality of life of residents (Jeffery, 2005).

Different scholars and international institutions use various indicators to measure the exercise good governance in a certain country/ area. For the purpose this study, accountability, transparency and responsiveness in relation with service delivery are used to measure local good governance in Horro district.

4.2.1. Accountability

Accountability is one of the most important indicators of good governance that used to judge the performance of local good governance in the study area. Accountability is the way which the officials become answerable and open to

the people for their deeds. Accountability can be seen in two ways, upward accountability and down ward accountability. Upward accountability is the way which local or lower units become accountable to the higher government and downward accountability is the way in which governments at different levels become accountable or answerable to the people and different stakeholders. Those who favors decentralization argues that engaging citizens in local governance improves accountability and the ability of local authorities to solve problems, creates more inclusive and cohesive communities, and increases the number and quality of initiatives made by communities.

There are different mechanisms that can be used to judge the accountability of governments, but in this study the presence of elected representatives and their accountability to the electorates, citizens recall their representative when their behavior and actions are contrary to their responsibility and mandates, and the extent to which representatives are accountable to the electorates are used to evaluate accountability.

Table 4.15: Accountability of councils and recall

Item	Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
1) Are the members of the <i>Kebele</i> and district council elected by the people?	Yes	131	100
	No	0	0
	I don't know	0	0
	Total	131	100.0
2) Do you think local elections make the councils accountable to the electorates?	Yes	670	51.1
	No	18	13.7
	I don't know	46	35.1
	Total	131	100.0
3) Do citizens recall their representatives when their behaviors and actions are contrary to their responsibilities and mandates?	Yes	96	73.3
	No	11	8.4
	I don't know	24	18.3
	Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

As depicted from the above table (item 1), all of the respondents confirmed that both *Kebele* and district councils are elected by the people. Needless to say, *Kebele* and district councils are the highest government organ at the *Kebele* and district level respectively. In the same table (item 2), 51.1% respondents confirmed that local elections make the councils accountable to the electorates. Whereas, 13.7% and 35.1% respondents replied “no” and “I don't know” respectively for the same question. This

means, the respondents argue that election of the councils do not make them accountable to the electorate, and other respondents do not know whether election is a guarantee for the councils accountability or not.

In the same table (item 3), 73.3% respondents responded that electorates can recall their representatives when their behaviors and actions are contrary to their responsibilities and mandates. The rest 8.4% and 18.3% respondents said “no” and

“I don’t know” respectively for the same question. From the table, by using highest percentage, it can be concluded that local elections can make representatives accountable to the electorate. In this regard, according to information secured from key informants, hypothetically local people elect their representatives in order to express their will and exercise their right through them. However, election is

not a complete guarantee for the council’s accountability to the electorate -- what some scholars call down-ward accountability. What practically going on is that, at the expense of the electorates, officials are mainly accountable to the rules of the game surrounding them -- upward accountability. Only if the demand comes from higher level, citizens can recall their representatives.

In principle, at local levels, the people have the power to remove and replace officials if they do not respond to the people’s needs. In practice, however, political interest may reign and individuals may be retained irrespective of people’s interest. In reality, there are many

In the above table, the respondents asked to rate the extent of accountability of their representatives. Accordingly, 22.1% and 30.5% of the respondents, with a mean value (mean= 2.40, SDV= .990), replied that elected representatives are accountable to very great extent and to great extent

Table 4.16: Extent of accountability

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid To very great extent	29	22.1	2.40	0.990
To great extent	40	30.5		
To some extent	43	32.8		
Never	19	14.5		
Total	131	100.0		

personal connections between members of local administration and members of the ruling party. Hence, local governments are more accountable to their political attachment than local people. Below table shows the extent to which the councils are accountable to their decisions and actions for the best of electorates.

respectively. On the other hand, 32.8% respondents responded that elected representatives are accountable to some extent, and the rest 14.5% respondents said that elected representatives are not accountable to the electorates. Based on greatest percentage indicated in the above table, it can be concluded that officials are accountable to some extent.

The interviewees argued that elected representatives are more accountable to the higher level government than to the local people. This, practically, weakens the accountability of local governments to the local people. To be accountable for higher level government is not a wrong idea, but special attention should be given for local preferences.

4.2.2. Transparency

Transparency is one of the major important elements of good governance since it creates openness and

accountabilities in the public offices. Transparency at local level paves a way for the people to participate in planning and decision making since it makes the systems free and open to the people. As a result it strengthens the trusts of the local people which it further assures legitimacy of the local government. In order to ensure transparency the local government has to disseminate information, make decisions public, make annual and progress reports public, ease accessibility of reports, let people know administrative decision making process.

Table 4.17: Transparency (information dissemination)

Items	Responses	Frequency	Valid percent
1) Does <i>Kebele</i> and district administration disseminate information to the people?	Yes	112	85.5
	No	19	14.5
	Total	131	100.0
2) How often government decisions and activities are publicized to the people?	Always	20	15.2
	Frequently	30	23.0
	Sometimes	60	45.8
	Rarely	21	16.0
	Never	0	0
	Total	131	100.0
3) Have you ever heard the annual and progress reports of local government?	Yes	41	31.3
	No	90	68.7
	Total	131	100.0

Source, Own survey, 2014

As indicated in the above table (item 1), majority of the respondents which accounts 85.5% responded that the *Kebele* and district administration disseminate information to the people, and the rest 14.5% replied as they do not disseminate information to the people. As such, it can be concluded that majority of the people have access to information of their *Kebele* and district administration. However, one critical problem that should be raised here

is on the quality of information. The key informants spelled out that, "... neither mini-media nor news paper exists in order to disseminate quality information. People who have close contact with officials may access accurate information, while others hear rumors which cannot be proved with sound justification". This shows that, there are no formal arrangement which helps to publicize accurate information's on time.

The data secured from interview reveals that *Kebele* administration in some cases uses public meetings to disseminate information to the people but this way of disseminating information is not effective as most people didn't participate in public meetings. The *Kebele* administration didn't create more alternatives to disseminate information to the people in addition to public meetings. In other words, there are no diversified ways of disseminating information. It is because of this, the information didn't reach the majority of the people. The people don't have the probability to get the information whenever they want. Because in the observation of the researcher, the documentation system (document holding) at *Kebele* level is very poor as the researcher failed to get some documents related with decisions and plans made by the *Kebele* governments. Since the district administration uses *Kebele* and its structure to reach the local people, failure of *Kebele* administration to disseminate information also resulted in failure of district.

In the same table (item 2), respondents were asked to rate the dissemination of information to the local people. Accordingly, 15.2% and 23% of the respondents replied that information is publicized always and frequently respectively. Majority of the respondents that constitutes 45.8% and 16% said sometimes and rarely, and no respondent responded 'never'. By using the highest percentage, the researcher concludes that information's are sometimes publicized to the local people.

The other important indicator of transparency is making annual and progress reports public. When the government and sector offices make reports (annual and progress) to public, people could know about what is been done and not done. In the same table (item 3), the respondents were asked whether they heard the annual and progress reports of local government or not. Accordingly, 3.13% respondents replied as they heard. However, 68.7% of respondents responded as they do not heard the annual and progress reports of local government.

As the extension of this question, the respondents were asked to reason out their failure to listen annual and progress reports of the local government, hence majority of the respondents answered that the local government do not invited the people to listen neither annual nor progress reports. So, the people couldn't get the chance to hear reports, not only the questionnaire respondents but also interviewees has proved that the executives and sector offices made reports (annual or progress report) to the *Kebele* and district council not to the people. The interviewees said that the "local people can't listen reports and basically reports are made for councils and the members of councils hears, evaluates and approves reports so once the councilors listened it is believed that peoples listened the reports since councilors are elected by the people".

Accordingly in Horro district, sector offices and government offices make reports to the district council in a regular way; however there are no ways to make public these reports to the people. As a result, it is too difficult for people to know

what is done and not done by the district council frequently. According to the interviewees from district administrative council, activities or deeds of the district administration are usually reported to the district council. The reporting system is much tight upwardly instead of downwardly to the people for example the district shall make a phone report to the zone once a week in every Monday, written reports once in every 15 days, sector offices make a report to the district administrative in every month, the district offices make quarter, biannual, and annual reports to the district finance and plan office and zonal government, district finance and plan office make biannual and annual reports to the district administrative council and after being approved it will be sent to zonal money directives (Horro District Annual Development and Good Governance Report, 2011). All these reporting mechanisms have shown much attention is given to the upward reporting mechanisms. However the researcher couldn't find any reporting mechanisms which can be used to make public the report to the local people. This shows that, like their accountability, upward transparency is strongly maintained by the local governments than down transparency.

It is not only at district level but also at *Kebele* levels; too, reports are not made public to the people. In most cases the reports are made for the *Kebele* councils. After being approved by the *Kebele* council the reports sometimes are public to the people in public meeting but most of the time withheld by the councils. In

addition to absence of media and mini-media in the area, when the researcher observed different offices at *Kebele* levels, most of the offices including the *Kebele* administrative offices did not have notice boards hence the *Kebeles* did not post reports in offices to the people. Just like the district reporting system, which is tight upwardly, the *Kebele* reporting systems are also tight enough upwardly. For instance, Horro District Annual Development and Good Governance Report (2011), illustrated that "*Kebeles* shall send information to the district once a week in every Sunday, and also shall send written reports to the district once a month". But nothing has been stated about the way which reports will be public to the people.

4.2.3. Responsiveness

Responsiveness is a process through which the choices and preferences of the citizens are converted in to administrative practices. Basically responsiveness underlines that the stakeholders and government agencies should strive to serve and respond to the interests of the people at a reasonable time. Different authors may use different parameters to evaluate the responsiveness of government agencies or stakeholders, but in this study, the indicators that used to check the responsiveness of local government are offering immediate responses to the needs of the people, mass based decision making process or making decision in consultation with the people, satisfaction of the people by the decisions rendered by the local government.

Table 4.18: Responsiveness of local governments

Items	Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
1) Does <i>kebele</i> and district administration give immediate responses to the needs and interests of the people?	Yes	25	19.1
	Sometimes	102	77.9
	No	4	3.1
	Total	131	100.0
2) Are decisions made based on the interests of the mass people?	Yes	37	28.2
	Sometimes	87	66.4
	No	7	5.3
	Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

As clearly shown in the above table (item 1), 19.15% respondents said that the *Kebele* and district administrations give immediate responses to the needs and interests of the people. However, majority of the respondents which accounts 77.9% replied that *Kebele* and district administration sometimes give immediate responses to needs and interests of the people, and the rest 3.1% responded that they do not give immediate responses to the needs and interests of the people. The interviewees from civic association leaders and district councils were also seriously underlined the problem of the *Kebele* and district administration in offering immediate responses to the needs of the people. According to them, the main problem exhibited in responding to the demands and needs of the people such as service delivery is the reluctant of the administrations in offering immediate responses. On the other hand, there are also demands which are beyond the capacity of both *Kebele* and district to respond.

For the second item in the same table, 28.2% of the respondent said that local

government decisions are made based on the interests of the mass people, and 66.4% of respondents replied, sometimes local government decisions are made based on the preference of the mass people. In the latter case, there is a space for local government officials to make a decision at the expense of the interest of mass people. For instance, some decisions are made based on the majority vote of councils, and there also areas in which people can participate in decision making to incorporate the mass interest. The rest which accounts 5.3% of respondents said that, no decisions are made based on the interests of the mass people.

The data which were collected from interviewees assured that the decision making process is not mass based. The interviewees (councils and civic association leaders) indicated that only the cabinets and councils (both at *Kebele* and district) are usually the exclusive participant in decision making process. The people did not have any opportunities to decide over grand decisions except petty decisions, like deciding on contributions and deciding places and time or when and

where to do collective activities in public meetings. Even though *Kebele* and district officials insisted that the decision making process was transparent and open, the civic association leaders stated that the decision

making process is not transparent and open as many people did not know how decision are made, when and what decisions are been made.

Table 4.19: Ranking responsiveness

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid				
Very good	10	7.6		
Good	66	50.4	2.53	.880
Fair	31	23.7		
Poor	24	18.3		
Total	131	100.0		

Source: Own survey, 2014

As shown in the above table, 7.6% and 50.4% of the respondents, with a mean value (mean= 2.53, SDV= 0.880) ranked the responsiveness of local government as very good and good, respectively. Whereas, the rest 23.7% and 18.3% have

ranked responsiveness of local government as fair and poor respectively. Therefore, the large number of respondents ranked the responsiveness the local government as good and fair.

Table 4.20: Other challenges of local governance

Item	Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
What do you think the major challenges of local governance in your district?	Shortage of budget	61	46.6
	Low participation	34	25.9
	Low resource mobilization	20	15.3
	Poor capacity of leaders	16	12.2
	Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

In addition to the above discussed challenges of local good governance in the district, respondents were asked to figure out other challenges of local governance. Accordingly, 46.6% of respondents confirmed with shortage of budget as a challenge of local governance. While the

rest 25.9%, 15.3% and 12.2% of respondents replied that the challenge of local governance is low participation, low resource mobilization and poor capacity of leaders respectively. Therefore, by using the highest percentage, the researcher concludes that shortage of budget is the

major challenge of local governance in the study area.

Concomitantly, the data obtained from interviewees reveals that local governance is challenged by all of the above mentioned factors. Particularly, shortage of budget is the major challenge that negatively affects the exercise of local governance in Horro district. Budget is the most important element to deliver sufficient services which in turn helps to improve the quality of life of peoples. Improving the living standard of local people through better service delivery is the ultimate goal of local governance. This forced the researcher to agree with a common saying, “The power of pocket determines the power of life”. In Horro district, as reported by interviewees from district council, the required annual budget is around twenty six million Ethiopian birr. Among this, only six million birr can be collected by internal revenue system such as taxes which is too small even to cover salary of government employees. For the rest twenty million birr, the district appeal for district grant from regional government. This shows the financial dependence of district on regional government to deliver public services.

Unfortunately, if the regional government is incapable to provide the district grant, the district remains in trouble to cope up with the demands of the people.

4.3. Service Delivery in Horro District

Decentralization holds great promise for improving the delivery of public services which assures quality of local governance and local development, but outcomes depend on its design and on the institutional arrangements governing its implementation. It has been argued that decentralization improves governance and public service delivery by increasing allocative efficiency--through better matching of public services to local preferences, and productive efficiency--through increased accountability of local governments to citizens, fewer levels of bureaucracy, and better knowledge of local costs (WB, 2001). By having this scenario in mind, the researcher discusses the provision of public services in Horro district. In this study, equal provision of services, timely of service delivery and peoples’ satisfaction to services delivered were used as parameters to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery in the study area.

Table 4.21: Equality in provision of public services

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	yes	30	22.9
	some times	63	48.1
	No	38	29.0
	Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

In the above table, the respondents were asked to show how equally services are

distributed. Accordingly, 22.9% of the respondents agreed with the question that

public services are delivered equally, while the rest 48.1% and 29% of the respondents agreed with “Sometimes” and “No” public services are offered to the people equally respectively. Accordingly, using the highest percentage of respondents, the researcher concludes that public services are sometimes delivered equally.

According to the interviewee from District Administrative Council, local officials perceive local demands but have limited authority to adjust services. Decentralization may increase allocative efficiency if local governments have the authority and willingness to adjust resource allocations and functions are devolved to a low enough level.

Table 4.22: Timely of service delivery

Item	Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent	Mean	SDV
How do you rate the timely of public services being delivered to the local people?	Very timely	3	2.3	3.05	.743
	Timely	24	18.3		
	Sometimes timely	68	51.9		
	Not timely	36	27.5		
	Total	131	100.0		

Source: Own survey, 2014

As clearly shown in the above table, 27.5% and 51.9% of the respondents agreed with public service delivery is not timely and somewhat timely respectively. While the rest 18.3% and 2.3% of the respondents preferred timely and very timely of public service delivery respectively. The researcher concluded that the large percent of the respondents, with the mean value (mean =3.05, SDV=0.743), are not delighted with the timely of public service deliveries. Among the different arguments in favor of

decentralization is that it facilitates coordinated and integrated service delivery as per local demands.

In the following table, the researcher has discussed the provisions of public services and their rank based on primary data. Special emphasis was given to seven services which are more demanded by the peoples of the district. These includes: potable water, electricity, education, health, roads, agricultural extension, saving and credit services.

Table 4.23: Overall assessment of services delivered in Horro district

Service type	VP (%)	P (%)	F (%)	G (%)	VG (%)	Total (%)	Mean	SDV
Potable water	39(29.8)	29(22.1)	33(25.2)	25(19.1)	5(3.8)	131(100)	2.45	1.12
Electricity	103(78.6)	18(13.7)	9(6.9)	1(0.8)	-	131(100)	1.30	.629
Roads	40(30.5)	42(32.1)	30(22.9)	10(7.6)	5(3.8)	127(96.9)	2.20	1.09
Education	6(4.6)	14(10.7)	55(42)	51(38.9)	5(3.8)	131(100)	3.27	.876
Health services	19(14.5)	34(26)	62(47.3)	15(11.5)	1(0.8)	131(100)	2.58	.903
Saving & credit services	1(0.8)	23(17.6)	29(22.1)	42(32.1)	36(27.5)	131(100)	3.68	1.083
Agricultural extension	24(18.3)	17(13)	50(38.2)	28(21.4)	1(0.8)	120(91.6)	2.71	1.06

*VP= Very Poor *P= Poor; *F= Fair; *G= Good; *VG= Very Good; *SDV= Standard

Deviation Source: Own survey, 2014

As it is depicted in the table 29.8%, 22.1% and 25.2% of the respondents, with the mean value (mean= 2.45, SDV= 1.121), were said that the provision of pure water is very poor, poor and fair respectively. While the rest 19.1% and 3.8% have said that the provision of pure water is good and very good respectively. At the same time 78.6% and 13.7% of the respondents, with the mean value (mean=1.30, SDV=.629) rated the provision of electricity as very poor and poor respectively, and the rest 6.9% and 0.8% of the respondents were agreed with good and very good electricity service delivery.

In the same table above, majority of the respondents that accounts 30.5% and 32.1%, with the mean value (mean=2.20, SDV=1.091), were agreed with very poor and poor existence of the road construction in their areas, respectively. Meanwhile the rest, 22.9%, 7.6% and 3.8% of the respondents were agreed with fair, good and very good in the road constructions. At the same time, in the same table,

respondents were asked to rate the provision of agricultural services. Accordingly, 18.3%, 13% and 38.2% of respondents, with a mean value (Mean=2.71, SDV=1.064), replied very poor, poor and fair provision of this service, and the rest 21.4% and 0.8% were said that agricultural extension service is good and very good respectively.

In the same table 4.6% and 10.7% of the respondents, with the mean value (mean=3.27, SDV=0.876) agreed with the provision of education service is very poor and poor respectively. On the other hand, majority of the respondents that accounts 42%, 38.9% and 3.8% were agreed with fair, good and very poor respectively. At the same time, respondents were also asked to rank health service of their district. Accordingly, 14.5%, 26% and 47.3% of respondents, with a mean value (mean= 2.58, SDV= 0.903), were ranked as very poor, poor and fair delivery of health service respectively, and the rest 11.5% and 0.8% of respondents agreed with good and very good provision of the

service. In the last item, in the same table, majority of the respondents which accounts 32.1% and 27.5% of the respondents with the mean value (mean= 3.68, SDV=1.083) were argued that saving and credit service is good and very good, while the rest 0.8%, 17.6% and 22.1% of the respondents were said that saving and credit service is fair, good and very good respectively. Therefore, the study having the large percentage of the respondents comes up with the conclusion that saving and credit service in the study area is good as compared to other services.

Majority of the interviewees were agreed that the major challenges in public service delivery are related with provision of pure water, electric power service, and agricultural extension services. Most of the time, in most *Kebeles*, people were using springs, hand dig water and river water for their household drinking purposes. Hence, the interviewees underlined the problem of pure water service delivery as a serious one. The researcher, while was at the area, has observed the people who search water using pack animals. What makes the problem worse is that, the district has only given the authority to build minor activities to provide pure water like developing spring water, and hand dig ground water. The district doesn't have the power and the resources for installing pipe water for the *Kebeles'* residents. This can be done by the regional government with its resources. Therefore, neither the regional government made huge projects in the provision of pure water nor the district government did small scale projects that could help the provision of pure water. On this beach, absence NGO

involvement in the area created a gap in the provision of pure water.

In addition to pure water service delivery, electric power service is another challenge that underrates the public service delivery status of the district. Only very small households in selected *Kebeles* named Chabir, Gudina Abuna *Kebele* and Sekela ol *Kebele* have got electric power currently in the district. But the rest *Kebeles* are not still getting electric power. The questionnaire respondents and interviewees were underlined the problem of having electric power as a serious challenge in addition to pure water service delivery. To majority of *Kebeles* in Horro district, electric pole were distributed, but electric power was not released. As such only the pole gave hope for the appetite of rural people (who aspires to use electric power once in their life time) for more than three years. In fact, the district deputy administrator has told that step-by step the rest *Kebeles*, which didn't get electric power service, can have electric power service since the district has planned to cover the uncovered areas in the coming next years.

Out of the above mentioned services, the interviewees and questionnaire respondents (as indicated in the above table) acknowledge the provision education service. Out of the public services education service scores high in the column of "Good" while the others score low in the "Good" column. Even though the education service is good comparatively still there are problems like inadequacy of books, laboratories and lab drugs, increment of students with limited number of rooms, uncomfortable

chairs, and limited school levels or grades which makes the education service not to be very good. For instance, a high school named “Haro shoti” was opened in 2010 by the people of the area. However, people lack capacity to fulfill materials required for the high school. Now a days, Haro shoti high school is functioning without library, laboratory and with shanty tables and chairs. All *Kebeles* do have primary schools (1-8 grades), three *Kebeles* do have secondary schools and there is one preparatory school in the district. As compared to other districts, the distributions of schools were not bad, but lack quality.

The health service is the other public services that the researcher used to evaluate the public service delivery status of the district. The respondents rated the health service as poor. There is one health center and health extension servers in each *Kebeles*, but the health centers are not well equipped with facilities to give services. Interviewees informed that the people are not satisfied with the provision of health services due to lack of drugs in health stores, lack of adequate skill and careless treatments given by the health officers and practitioners to the people. As a result of this the people are shifting to private clinics instead of public health centers.

Having this in mind the road construction services are another challenge. The very limited numbers of *Kebeles* are interconnected in roads which are situated at the high way, Chaabir, Sekela 01, Gitilo Dale and Gudina Abuna. Whereas the rest *Kebeles* are interconnected only in the winter season but in the summer season the movements of people in these *Kebeles*

are made on foot or using pack animals. In fact, now days the district’s rural road development is constructing roads to interconnect some of the *Kebeles* like Haro Aga and Chambe, but still other *Kebeles* are not yet interconnected. Despite, the construction of asphalt road is a long held dream which were not solved still for the *Kebeles*, district and at zone of the area.

The other one is saving and credit services, as it is clearly stated in the above table majority of the respondents rated saving and credit service as good and very good. One recent development is the intervention of Wasasa and Oromiya saving and credit micro finance institutions. These institutions give loans for local people. However, the key informants informed that “... lack of experience on how to utilize money from the local people coupled with lack of skill by officials who operate in these institutions created a problem in the area”. Training was not effectively given to the local people while giving loan. Only few individuals and officials are taken short term training by these microfinance institutions. During data collection, the researcher found many residents are victims of debts from these microfinance’s, but only little use the money appropriately.

The other important service is agricultural extension services. This service very important for the people of the district as majority of them is farmers. As indicated in the above table responses from majority of respondents fall under “Fair” column. This shows that the delivery of agricultural extension service were to expected level. The interviewees on the other hand were also agreed with this idea, development

agents and agriculture experts have been doing their best but the peoples didn't accept them and most of the time they are ineffective. The people's coordination with the development agents and agriculture experts is weak because the people want to use the traditional methods of farming systems. As a result their missions were

Based on the above assessment, respondents have been asked to know the satisfaction of peoples by services delivered in the district and discussed as follows.

Table 4.24: Peoples satisfaction on service delivered

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid yes	58	44.3
No	73	55.7
Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

As indicated in the above table, people were asked their satisfaction on the provision of public services delivered to them. Accordingly, 44.3% of respondents confirmed that they are satisfied with the services delivered. However, majority of the respondents which accounts 55.7% replied their dissatisfaction of service delivery. As such, using the largest percentage of respondents, it can be concluded that majority of the people are not satisfied with services delivered.

In this regard, civic association leaders have been asked to know the satisfaction of the peoples by the services delivered in the respective *Kebeles*. Accordingly, the interviewees agreed that the people are not satisfied to the services delivered by the local government. Particularly they indicated that the pure water services delivery, health service delivery, and electric power service delivery and road

usually unattainable. On the other hand, according to key informants, some agriculture experts are careless, and hence do not want to go within the villages to guide the farmers on how to maximize productivity. They give trainings for only selected farmers at their station.

services are poor that makes low the satisfaction of people in the deliverance of services. It is also revealed that since the local governments (*Kebele* administration) are not budgetary units they cannot make decisions which best answer the needs and interest of the people.

4.4. Autonomy of the District

As it has been clearly explained in the program, one of the objectives of decentralizing power and function to the district level is bringing government to the frontier with multiple functions and powers to respond to citizen's demands effectively and quickly. This requires autonomy of the district to decide over its jurisdiction. It has also aimed at identifying local problems and mobilizing the people to address problems with their participation (PSCAP, 2004).

Table 4.25: District's Autonomy

Item	Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
How do you rate the autonomy of the district to perform its functions?	Very strong	2	1.5
	Strong	20	15.3
	Fair	33	25.2
	Weak	60	45.8
	Very weak	16	12.2
	Total	131	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2014

As indicated in the above table, 1.5%, 15.3% and 25.2% of respondents rated the autonomy of their district as very strong, strong and fair respectively. However, majority of the respondents, which accounts 45.8% confirmed as the district has weak autonomy to perform its functions in its jurisdiction, and the rest 12.2% rated as very weak.

According to data obtained from interviewees, the DLDP is not implemented as planned in Horro district. This shows there exists dis-functionalities in some aspects of its performance and activities which need remedial action to be done. The major problem, they mentioned, are “interference from zonal administration and regional government in the affairs of the district’s a economic problem, shortage of skilled personnel, lack of commitment and confidence on the part of leadership in decision making.”

According to one of participants in interview, “... though the district government has constitutionally granted powers to run the district’s day to day activities in line with the reality of the district per se, zonal intervention and directives, which can not reflect the district’s reality, are the challenges to

district’s autonomy in deciding matters concerning the district as vision by the DLDP”. Unconstitutional and down-ward orders, using unofficial means, are the main factors which are threatening districts autonomy. The constitutionally granted powers and the practical or actual power are not congruent. The theoretical powers of the district are more than the actual one. Due to upper level interference in the decision of the district, it is impossible to say the district is fully autonomous in administering itself. There is down ward pressure particularly on the administrative council to accept higher level orders and directions which have no practical importance to the district. Therefore, lack of autonomy by the district is another important challenge of local governance, in addition to the above mentioned local good governance and service delivery challenges, in Horro district.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The attempt to setup local self-administration at local level in Ethiopia was started during the imperial regime with the establishment of provinces, districts and sub districts with the issuance of different Decrees and Orders, but it was

not effective. Then after, the introduction of urban dwellers associations and peasant associations were another drives made by the military regime in the local administration systems. However, just like the imperial regime, the military regime was not effective in the substantive maneuvers of the local governance. This was due to the incompatibility of the regime's policy (policy of centralization) with the basic intent of local self-administration.

Nevertheless, the radical decentralization measures have taken place with the coming of EPRDF government in 1991 which brought a breakthrough for the establishment of local self-administrations. Accordingly, the power of the central government has been devolved to the regional government, and the regional governments have been given considerable powers and functions over their jurisdictions (FDRE constitution, 1995). In turn, the regional governments have been also empowered to establish other administrative agencies like, district and *Kebele* administrative units. These units are usually assumed as community based where people actively interact with them. The powers and functions of these tiers of government were officially recognized with the 2001 district level decentralization program which makes a practical step in the empowerments of the district administration. The Oromiya regional state was also took this drives since 2001.

The district administration is responsible to prepare and decide on the economic development and social service plans as well as to implement policies, laws,

regulations and directives issued by the regional government. As a result, the district government is expected to ensure participation, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and efficiency and effectiveness in public service delivery. On the rational ground, the proximity of government to the local people as a result of administrative decentralization helps to ensure working local governance, but if there are frictions while devolving powers and functions to lower tiers of government and lack of enthusiasm from stakeholders', it would be difficult to maintain local governance.

In line with the above indicators of local governance, the implication of administrative decentralization to local governance, stakeholders' participation, challenges of local governance, public service delivery and the practical application of decentralization in Horro district have been assessed, and the following findings are likely been pointed out.

Key to local governance is stakeholders' participation such as community, Civil Society Organizations and private sector, in development activities and administration. Stakeholders' participation is imperative for local governance since it enables to formulate and execute collective actions for the best of local people. Election is a major indicator of political participation through which citizens elect their representatives based on their consent to exercise power. In Horro district, it is found out that the members of the councils (district and *Kebeles*) are elected by the people. However, the election system was not transparent and open since the

members of the councils are not elected in a secret ballot box with popular election campaigns. Nomination is always top-down. The party intruding and cabinets' interference in the local election process is also another factor which impedes the local election system. As figured out by the respondents, People's participation on *Kebele* affairs and local issue is not promising since majority of them participate on meeting monthly.

People's participation (individually and/or in group) in development activities is a driving force to improve their living standard. Indeed, the major goal of local governance is to transform the peoples' life from unsympathetic to wellbeing by reducing poverty. Poverty reduction requires active participation of people/community, CSOs and private sector in development activities. In Horro district, the finding shows that people have enthusiastic to participate on development activities both individually and in group through grass root organizations such as *iddir* and the government instituted *gares*.

More importantly, *iddir* have a motive to participate on development by mobilizing resources, emergency support, and organizing meeting, but their activity is limited by shortage of finance and skilled personnel. On the other hand, the reluctance of people to *gares* as structural arrangement of government imposed up on them is also another challenge to public participation in development activities. According to the data obtained from all *Kebeles* under study, in most cases they simply serve formality. The purpose of grouping the scattered households together to increase productivity, ease service

delivery and enhance social cohesion was not a bad or wrong idea. But when these structures are superimposed, farmers are strongly against whatever results they may bring. It would be difficult to realize such plans particularly in areas where the essence of 'democracy' is totally misunderstood. As such, level of public participation is not as expected. From the observation, the researcher learned that there are several traditional units in all spheres of life. The problem is no one pays attention to building on these existing structures. They always want to superimpose new structures which fail after a while.

In addition, it was found out that participation of CSOs and private sector is very low due to poor infrastructural facilities and misunderstanding about the purpose and functions of these stakeholders' by government officials. In the study area, only few indigenous CSOs and private sectors exist with limited capital. Besides all these shortfalls, the district also needs to maintain a data base of donors in the country. They need to prepare complete profiles of the district (which I couldn't find) and give special attention to the sector. They should not limit themselves to receiving only those who come to them. Knowing that the annual budget they receive from the state hardly goes beyond per diem of selected employees, they must look around for the additional inputs that come from CSOs. Particularly, from private sector, Oromiya Credit and Saving Share Company (OCSSCO) and Wasasa micro-finance institution are operating in the district, but not as expected.

Participation in administration is manifested by the involvement of people in decision making process. In Horro district, the participation of the local people in decision making process is very weak. Most of the time the cabinets and councilors are exclusively participating in the decision making process on public issues. As such, there is indirect participation in decision making process. However, there are issues which requires unanimous consensus of public at large. For example, if the government wants to transfer farm land of farmers for private investor or other institutions, the land holders should have participate to decide. Because, such decisions affects their daily life.

Both *Kebele* and district councils are elected by the people. On a rational ground, such local elections make the councils accountable to the electorate downwardly, and to higher level governments upwardly. However, the findings from the respondents spell out that their accountability is more upward to the zone and regional government. This shows that local elections are not as such effective and efficient in holding the executives accountable to the people since the cabinets overtake the councils in most its works both at district and *Kebele* levels. As such, local representatives serve as a principal for higher level governments rather than accommodating the interests of local people. This in turn grinds down the legitimacy of local representatives by local people.

District councils and *Kebele* councils are not autonomous and also *Kebele* councils are also not well equipped with necessary

materials, and even in some *Kebeles* the *Kebele* councils do not have offices. This actually hampers the activities of the councils. Moreover the largest of the members of the *Kebele* council poses challenge in the activities of the council. On the other hand, absence of incentives to the members of the councils and being most of the members of the council are farmers, they devote their time in their private works. This actually impedes the performance of the members of the council. As result, a sense of accountability is not promising in Horro district and need much improvement to be done.

The government offices at district and *Kebele* administrations attempted to access information to the people. However, due to the absence of any media, people do not access accurate information's. Nevertheless, the local government also didn't make annual and progress reports public since the respondents confirmed that they did not listen the reports of the government offices. The accessibility of the reports is not ease where the people cannot find the reports anywhere. These show the low level of transparency in the study area.

The local administrative government at *Kebele* and district didn't offer immediate responses for the peoples and, most of the time; decisions were made without considering the interest of mass population. Accordingly, people were hardly satisfied with the decisions and responses of the government officials. Lack of adequate resources, budgets, resource mobilization, and skilled manpower makes the *Kebele* and district

government unfortunate in responding the needs and interests of the people which in turn resulted poor performance of local government in the sense of responsiveness.

In a nutshell, the exercises of good governance by local administrative leaders were improved to some extent as compared with hitherto governments. The respondents confirmed that local administrative leaders attempt to become transparent, responsive and accountable, but encircled by the above discussed challenges which handicapped local governance practices.

The status of service delivery in Horro district founds to be low, inefficient and ineffective. It is only education, saving and credit service and agricultural extension service are relatively good as the finding has indicated. While others, pure water, electric power services, health and road constructions are low that people were not delighted with its provisions. The service delivery in Horro district is also rarely distributed equally, and characterized by delays since most of the respondents are indicting the public service delivery as not timely. On the other hand, the interviewees were also underlined the problems of public service delivery as a serious one. Those are the challenges of local governance in the study area.

District level decentralization program is aimed at making the government closer to the people in order to assure the exercise of good governance by having participatory decision making and planning process, transparency, downward accountability, responsiveness and rendering public services efficiently and

effectively. However, the indicators of good governance in Horro district revealed that the performance of the district in the exercise of local governance is poor even though progress has been registered as compare with the past regimes in the exercise of good governance. This happened because of a lot of pitfalls that intervenes in the decentralization process like unnecessary and unconstitutional intervention from higher level governments (particularly from zone), executive dominations at local level, upward accountabilities, top down nomination approach, absence of skilled manpower, limited participatory systems, and lack of adequate budget. All these are an intervene factors that shadow the decentralization process which in turn weaken the district's performance in exercising local governance.

5.2 Recommendations

Based up on the above findings, the researcher forwards the following possible alternative solutions which may help to improve local governance.

1. Participation of the community, CSOs and private sector should be improved. The district should invite NGOs and encourage private sector to participate on local issues. Special attention should be given to those sectors and the campaign of understanding should also mobilize about the purposes and functions of those sectors. The engagement such actors would enable to make collective decisions for the betterment of local people.

2. Establishing elected government at the grassroots level is a one step achievement by itself to assure good governance but not a guarantee for the exercise of local governance. Hence, there should be competent, transparent and open and periodic local election systems. There should be also popular election campaigns and secret ballot box when representatives are elected. The presence of popular election campaign makes the representative more responsive and accountable to the electorates. Making local elections in a secret ballot box makes the election mass based and popular. The party and the cabinets' intruding should be avoided when representatives are elected.
3. A free and responsible media should be there for disseminating information, providing accountability and assisting district administration build a dialogue with the community. Media can make a significant contribution to the decentralization process by giving third party views as the policy makers will be informed on their policy intervention and will inform people, the decision made by the central and local governments. Media can affect behavior by informing voters about a politician's views or actions, enlightening citizens to outcomes of public policy, or taking a stance on political, social or economic issues. Media can be used as the platform for strengthening decentralization and help the development of local leadership. It can provide integrated information systems and a communications infrastructure as a backup for the decentralized governance and thus contribute towards delivering equitable development.
4. As the majority of the respondents have indicated, the status of public service delivery is low; hence the district has to reconsider this and is better to invest more budgets for public services in the coming years to enhance the status of public services.
5. Local issues must be left for locals. It is better understood by the local authorities than any other authority. So, higher level government should focus on its home work in creating clear understanding on policies and strategies of the country to lower level policy makers and implementers. Unnecessary and unconstitutional intervention should be avoided. Because they are infringing the mandates and purpose of district government given by the regional constitution and its value in DLDP.
6. To ensure good governance at local level, special attention should be given to the recruitment of local administrative leaders. Officials should be recruited based on their leadership skill and commitment, rather than sole loyalty to the ruling party. In addition, giving updated leadership training is important for local administrative leaders.
7. Allow the people to participate in the decision making process, after decision are made it is better to make public,

make progress and annual reports public by using various alternatives, accessing reports and information to people in order to ensure transparency at local level. Not only upward accountability, but also down accountability is also another issue which needs improvement. Public interest should be at the core of decision making.

8. District government must use its maximum effort in mobilizing financial resources to overcome shortage of budget and poor service delivery thereof.
9. Generally, the district, by having further investigations, has to reconsider the challenges posed on the process of decentralization or district level decentralization and then mitigate them in order to promote local governance.

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